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ABSTRACT

CERAMIC ARCHITECTURAL MODELS FROM THE  
MADABA PLAINS REGION: A SELECTED  
ART HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

by

Stefanie P. Elkins

Adviser: Randall W. Younker



## ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: CERAMIC ARCHITECTURAL MODELS FROM THE MADABA PLAINS  
REGION: A SELECTED ART HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Name of researcher: Stefanie P. Elkins

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Randall W. Younker, Ph.D.

Date completed: March 2018

### Problem

Architectural models can be described as small, ceramic, house-shaped structures that come in an often bewildering array of shapes and sizes. They appear all over the ancient Near East, and although evidence shows that they were created as early as the Neolithic period, they seem to have peaked in popularity and proliferation during the Iron Age. A few studies and several typologies have been offered over the years, but none have addressed iconography or artistic motifs as well as shape. Furthermore, no in-depth typology of architectural models within the country of Jordan has been offered. This dissertation explores the symbiotic relationship between art-historical analysis and archaeology by comparing mostly unpublished architectural models and fragments from

two sites in Jordan, Tall al-‘Umayri and Khirbet ‘Ataruz, and paralleling them with the larger corpus of architectural models from surrounding regions.

### Method

Drawing on previous studies and typologies, this study involves a comprehensive description of each object from an art-historical viewpoint. Visual inspection and study of these objects first-hand was placed against a broader picture put forth by publications, focusing on iconography, potential interpretation, and architectural models in general. Positioned within the context of the archaeological setting, this analysis has allowed for suggested interpretations about the iconography, creation, use, and proposed cultic practices of which these objects were part.

### Results and Conclusions

The results of this study have shown that the architectural models and fragments chosen for research were an important part of a thriving cultic life during the Iron Age at both Tall al-‘Umari and Khirbet ‘Ataruz. The study has also revealed a busy architectural model industry that is demonstrated by the varying styles, ability levels, and cultural influences found within each object. By analyzing the formal artistic qualities of each object within the archaeological context, the importance that these objects had upon the lives of those who created them as well as the patrons who utilized and worshiped through them has been demonstrated. The analysis of fragments along with more complete forms has also allowed for a greater picture of distribution and has revealed that these objects were more common than previously thought.

The compilation of the data gathered in this study called for a new type of typology to be created in order to unify and streamline research for the architectural models of Transjordan. The creation of the Madaba Plains Architectural Model Typology allows for a more streamlined categorization based on type and ornamentation and is easily adaptable as new data comes to light.

Andrews University  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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MADABA PLAINS REGION: A SELECTED ART  
HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

A Dissertation  
Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

by  
Stefanie P. Elkins

March 2019

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ADAJ</i>	<i>Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan</i>
ASOR	American Schools of Oriental Research
<i>AUSS</i>	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
<i>BAS</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeology Society</i>
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
MP AMT	Madaba Plains Architectural Model Typology
MPP	Madaba Plains Project
<i>NEA</i>	<i>Near Eastern Archaeology</i>
NIV	New International Version
YHWH	The Hebrew divine name for God

## CHRONOLOGICAL PERIODS

Neolithic Period	8500-4500 B.C.E.
Chalcolithic Period	4500-3600 B.C.E.
Early Bronze Age	3600-2400 B.C.E.
Middle Bronze Age	2400-1550 B.C.E.
Late Bronze Age	1550-1200 B.C.E.
Iron Age	1200-586 B.C.E.
Iron IA	1200-1140/1130 B.C.E.
Iron IB	1140/1130-1000/980 B.C.E.
Iron IIA	1000/980-840/830 B.C.E.
Iron IIB	840/830-732/701 B.C.E.
Iron IIC	732/701-605/586 B.C.E.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

#### **Overview**

At the end of the Bronze Age, the collapse of the Egyptian Empire altered both the social and political situation in Canaan, thus creating varied social-political forms and divergent cultural traditions, including artistic ones, all over the Levant<sup>1</sup>. While state formation in the subsequent Iron Age ensued at different rates<sup>2</sup>, all were permeated to some extent by distinct local artistic traditions. These traditions were further dictated by the differences found in social stratification and settlement hierarchy that developed due to wide social gaps and inequalities. Definitions of state differ widely, but statehood as it pertains to the Iron Age in the Levant can largely be defined as a large stratified society ruled by a king or priest-king who had ultimate authority (Renfrew and Bahn 1991). In contrast to these large states were the rural areas, which were more family oriented. These areas tended to exhibit a tribal kingdom model which was organized by kinship in a primarily agricultural and pastoral system (LaBianca 1999: 19-23). These organized

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<sup>1</sup> The Levant is a geographical historical term used to describe a large area in the Eastern Mediterranean region. Traditionally referring to the areas found today in the modern countries of Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, Cyprus, Iraq, and Turkey, this study focus on the areas of the Levant found in Israel, Syria, Lebanon, and most specifically, Jordan.

<sup>2</sup> See H.J.M. Claessen and P. Skainick (1981) who discuss the laborious process of state formation from tribal groups to highly-specialized and fully developed territorial states. See also Garfinkle for a more current definition of a city-state (2013: 94-96).

tribal groups would form the political entities of Transjordan; Ammon, Moab, and Edom (LaBianca and Younker 1995).<sup>3</sup> Although each tribal polity had control over vast territories, these territories often overlapped with one another resulting in cooperative, albeit sometimes contentious, relations with a shared material culture. While the polities of Ammon, Moab, and Edom lacked an urban settlement pattern, including large state ordained temples and a dictated artistic canon put forth from the royal household, the impression upon which the arts of the greater civilizations had upon these groups was profound.

Geographical diversity and the extent to which the great civilization of Egypt had influenced, whether by direct rule or via trade, combined with new artistic forms introduced by the Sea Peoples, the Assyrians, and the Phoenicians, helped fan the flames of diversity seen so abundantly at the beginning of the Iron Age (Moorey 2005: 199). This diversity would manifest itself in a profusion of small, private cult corners, shrines, and cultic assemblages reflecting the cultures influencing artisans throughout the Levant. Included in these cultic assemblages are ceramic vessels, figurines, incense stands, and architectural models, which include cult stands and model shrines. As most of these objects are primarily hand modeled out of clay, with at most only parts made in a mold, regionalism is apparent and hybridization common (Moorey 2005: 199-201).

Architectural models are a characteristic feature of Iron Age cult assemblages in the southern Levant in particular. The term “architectural models” was made common by Beatrice Muller who laid the groundwork for most of the typological categories that have been used for these objects throughout the Levant. Defined as small models that resemble

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<sup>3</sup> For more on tribal kingdom models, see Khoury and Kostiner (1990), and Van der Steen (2010).

houses or temples, these objects are typically made out of terracotta clay, which was then fired in a kiln or oven to form a ceramic object (Muller 2002: 7-18). The term “architectural models” was therefore selected for use as an umbrella term under which the objects examined for this dissertation fall.

Not a new occurrence, architectural models have been in use for various cultic purposes across the Near East since the Neolithic Period, and according to Karl van der Toorn, “clay models of sacred architecture with cult images kept the real shrines and real images alive and kindled the devotion of those who possessed or dedicated them,” (1998: 94, 2002: 58-59). Made of various materials including clay, bronze, limestone and basalt (DeVries 1987: 28), they are usually found in cultic assemblages.

Architectural models and their fragments have been found in nearly every archaeological excavation in Israel and Jordan, as well as places such as Cyprus, Syria, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. The focus of this dissertation concerns the area of Transjordan with the architectural models and fragments being presented coming from the Iron Age. However, some examples given will be from earlier or later periods. The following paragraphs will give examples of architectural models from each of the above mentioned countries as a brief introduction to demonstrate the vastness of their distribution.

From Israel, among the many architectural models that will be looked at in this study, are the large collection of cult stands uncovered at Yavneh in 2002 (Kletter, Ziffer and Zwickel 2010: 14-15) and dating to Iron Age II, as well as the famous Ta’anach stand (Glock 1997: 149) from the 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.

Parallels to architectural models from Jordan are rare and most examples are unprovenanced<sup>4</sup>, such as the nearly complete model shrine from the Moussaeiff Collection (Maeir and Dayagi-Mendels 2007: fig. 1). However, architectural model fragments from controlled excavations such as those from Wadi ath-Thamed Site WT – 13 (Daviau 2017: 142-48) and the two cult stands from Pella (Potts, Colledge and Edwards 1985: 204) offer contextual evidence of a prolific use of architectural models in the Transjordanian region during the Iron Ages.

From Cyprus, two clay shrine models from Idalion, now located in the Musée du Louvre in Paris, lack a secure archaeological context but have been dated to the local Iron Age (Cypro-Achaic, 750-300 B.C.E.) and showcase two styles of model shrines; circular and rectangular (Figure 1.1), both attested in the corpus of model shrines found in Jordan and Palestine. The Idalion models also reveal two columns flanking the entrances; classic identifiers of a model shrine (Soldi 2012: 462-63).



Figure 1.1. Model shrine from Idalion dating to the Cypro-Achaic Period, currently located in the Louvre Museum, Paris (photo by the author).

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<sup>4</sup> The term unprovenanced is given to an artifact when the origin of that artifact is unknown or dubious at best. This could be due to data being lost, questionable excavation documentation, or most likely, through the looting or illegal selling of an artifact on the antiquities market.

From Syria, examples come from the Middle Bronze Age up through the Late Bronze Age at Hamman et-Turkman and Selemiyah, where a group of clay architectural models (Figure 1.2) from Tell Meskene (Emar) were discovered and show similarities in



Figure 1.2. Model shrine from Syria dating to the Late Bronze Age, currently located in the Louvre Museum, Paris (photo by the author).

form with architectural models of later periods found in Jordan (Moorey 2005: 197-98).

From Egypt (Figure 1.3), architectural models have been confirmed as early as the



Figure 1.3. Various house models from Egypt ranging from the Old Kingdom through the Ptolomaic Period, currently located in the Louvre Museum, Paris (photo by the author).

Naqada II period (3500-3200 B.C.E.) of Predynastic Egypt. A particular model now housed in the Royal Ontario Museum depicts a stable or storehouse that is painted and incised with decorations depicting various animals including rare images of bovines and ibexes (McHugh 1990: 265-80).

From Greece, a yet-to-be published model shrine was recently excavated on the island of Crete from the sanctuary at Pyrgos, Tylissos. Dating to the Early Bronze Age, this circular model has three stories with a figurine peeking out of a window. The author was able to get permission to photograph the object for personal research, but to not publish the photo. The model is currently located in Gallery 11, Case 21 at the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion, but no other information was available except that which was obtained through a brief interview with the curator of the Bronze Age collection at the museum.

From Rome, the best examples were made by the Etruscans, the early Roman civilization that developed around 800 B.C.E., in the area now known as Tuscany, Italy. A well-preserved model of a temple dating to the 3<sup>rd</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> centuries B.C.E. is currently located at the Museo della Città Etrusca e Romana, Cortona (Martinelli and Paolucci 2007: 5) and attests to architectural models continued used past the Iron Age.

Architectural models are identified by their overall appearance, which is usually a cylindrical or globular receptacle, or a rectangular or squared box. Frequently exhibiting an entryway and sometimes windows, they resemble architectural structures such as houses or temples in an idealized form suited to specific purposes that scholars still do not fully understand. Architectural elements can be obvious in the forms of multiple stories, porches, moldings, façades, flanking columns, and painted features. They can

have rounded or flat “roofs,” or be topped by an incense bowl or horned altar. Some are plain with simple openings, and some are lavishly adorned with applied, incised, or painted iconography in the form of figurines, composite beings, decorative architectural elements, and symbols. However, these models, while resembling buildings or temples, did not necessarily replicate actual structures. Rather, it appears to be the sacredness endowed upon the models that gave them their importance.

### **Purpose of the Research**

This dissertation will look at selected architectural models from two sites located within the Madaba Plains region of the country of Jordan. The sites, Tall al-‘Umayri, and Khirbet ‘Ataruz, were chosen due to the unpublished nature of the architectural models and fragments found at these sites, as well as for the strong archaeological context in which they were excavated. By exploring the symbiotic relationship between art history and archaeology through the art-historical analysis of the selected ceramic architectural models and fragments, and comparing them to the larger corpus of architectural models from surrounding regions, it is the intention that the study will provide important data that will fill in the gaps from existing typologies and classifications of architectural models from the Levant, while setting the stage for creating a more substantial architectural model typology for Transjordan starting with the Madaba Plains region. Furthermore, the resulting findings will better inform scholars about the cultic role these architectural models played at the sites of Tall al-‘Umayri and Khirbet ‘Ataruz and the impact they might have had in the lives of the artisans, the patrons, and the cultures in which they were created.

While architectural models have been discovered all over the ancient world, no in-depth study has been conducted that categorizes all known architectural models specifically from the Transjordan region according to shape as well as to iconography or artistic motif. This is primarily due to the lack of detailed comprehensive studies of architectural models that have been identified in Transjordan. In addition, scholars have not fully considered the art-historical aspects of these often-iconographical enigmatic artifacts. Especially, there has been a failure to find a comprehensive link between the scientific analysis of artifacts; that is, the archaeological data that is collected surrounding objects, and an analysis more akin to postmodern critical theory<sup>5</sup> which involves a more philosophical and qualitative assessment<sup>6</sup> and critique of culture by applying knowledge from the humanities; in this case, art history. In other words, an attempt will be made to take into account the historical and cultural contexts in which these architectural models were made and what impact the iconography would have had upon the artisans and their communities.

It seems that only a handful of archaeologists have considered the importance of iconography when it comes to the examination of artifacts and have therefore analyzed it accordingly. The passing reference given to artistic analysis overall when detailed study of such material could offer much more is best summed up by Keel and Uehlinger;

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<sup>5</sup> According to Lindlof and Taylor, postmodern critical theory politicizes social problems, "by situating them in historical and cultural contexts, to implicate themselves in the process of collecting and analyzing data, and to relativize their findings" (Lindlof, T. R. and Taylor, B. C. 2002: 49).

<sup>6</sup> Qualitative research is used when focusing on the human elements of the social and natural sciences and is a way of gathering non-numerical data. This type of research, "refers to the meanings, concepts definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and description of things," and not to their, "counts or measures. This research answers how and when a certain phenomenon occurs" (Berg and Lune 2012: 3).



Only someone who chooses not to ignore an entire category of the puzzle pieces from the outset (and that the largest portion!), that category being the iconographic sources, will be able to hope to put together a more or less adequate picture of the puzzle as a whole (Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 5)

While we can in no way determine individual thought that went into the creation of these objects, we can study the ideology of ancient people through their religion, culture, and art and through that, construct a more useful interpretation. Religious views, while expressed from text, were more often given a visual form on items used for worship. By examining the architectural models from Tall al-‘Umayri and Khirbet ‘Ataruz in a way that takes into account art-historical analysis<sup>15</sup>, which will include a more in-depth look at “style” in the next chapter, it is the goal of this dissertation to better inform scholars on the religious practices that were a part of the folk religion of the people of the Madaba Plains region during the Iron Age.

### **Background to the Study**

The architectural models from the Madaba Plains region and the surrounding vicinity in Jordan are diverse. Creating a typology, or stylistic category<sup>16</sup>, if possible, requires a thorough review of the existing typologies for ancient Near Eastern architectural models in general. Adding to the complex debate about categorization is the question of what separates the types of architectural models. How does a model shrine differ from a cult stand, or what separates a cult stand from an incense stand? Did they

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<sup>15</sup> The art-historical investigation will be framed from a formal analysis point of view. Formal analysis involves in-depth descriptions of the visual elements of an artwork as well as proposals about what the iconographical features suggest and why artisans used such features to convey specific ideas. Combined with comparisons to similar artworks, formal analysis goes beyond mere description as the description is used as means to support the argument at hand.

<sup>16</sup> Art historians typically speak in matters of “style” when referring to artworks that fall into similar categories based on their appearance and/or iconographical information. Artistic style and its problems and limitations will be discussed in Chapter 2.

serve the same or a similar function? Are they interchangeable terms? These questions have been addressed to varying degrees over the years by scholars depending on the characterization of the typology being used. This dissertation will look at typologies presented by various scholars including Beatrice Muller, Lamoine DeVries, Joachim Bretschneider, Peter Werner, Pierre de Miroschedji, Hava Katz, Ziony Zevit, Michele Daviau, Garth Gilmour, Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger, Christian Frevel, and Raz Kletter. Some of the typologies presented seem to relate to the function of architectural models while others have utilized categories based on form. According to Raz Kletter, one of the problems with typology is that many scholars have come to discuss these artifacts without a detailed typological scheme. Rather, each object is discussed individually (Kletter, Ziffer and Zwickel 2010: 25).

The term “architectural models” is being employed in this study due because the term is fairly neutral. It is important to note that many scholars have used differing terms and definitions when referring to these objects including “house models,” “shrine models,” “incense stands,” “cult stands,” and the like. By using the term “architectural models” as an overarching term to describe the objects included in the study, it becomes possible to include both model shrines and cult stands which usually have architectural elements like the ones found at Khirbet ‘Ataruz and Tall al-‘Umayri. Using the term “architectural models” conveys that the objects in the study are comprised of elements common to buildings such as “walls,” “roof,” “windows,” “columns,” “façade,” “entryway,” or “doorway.” The language used is an architectural one. However, the use of architectural terms to describe the structure of these objects does not necessarily imply that the objects in this study represented actual buildings.

Focusing in on the Levant, the greatest number of architectural models seem to date from the Late Bronze Age through Iron Age II. This can be attested from well-excavated sites in ancient Palestine like Hazor (Yadin, et al: 1961, pls. CCCXLV:II and CCCXXXI:1, 2, 3), Megiddo (May 1908: pl. XX, nos. P 6055-6056; pl. XIII, no. 2986; pl. XII, no. M 5331, and 1935: pl. XVIII, no. M 1342; Loud, 1948: pls. 148:2-3, 80:9, 81:12, 253:3, 251, 254:1-4; Lamon and Shipton: 1939: pls. 38: 7, 65: 7; Schumacher: 1908: 125, 190, 117, 118:a and c), Taanach (Wilson: 1969: fig. 29), and Arad (Aharoni: 1969: fig.12, and 1967: pl. 47). To the same degree that architectural models have been found over a prolonged period of time, they have also been recovered over a wide geographical range as previously mentioned. For example, architectural models from Egypt yield helpful information, as cult stands are illustrated in both well-preserved tomb paintings and reliefs, and archaeological excavations have produced these objects along with vessels associated with their use (Bentancourt 1983: 32).

The discussion that follows will highlight leading scholars involved in the debate of architectural models, their classification systems, and any advantages and/or disadvantages with each typology as it applies to this study. First, a general overview of typologies by various scholars will be examined followed by those focusing specifically on the southern Levant, with additional studies where necessary. Finally, a new typology will be proposed and a definition of terms for the Madaba Plains region will be given to be utilized throughout the rest of the study.

## Typologies

### General Typologies

Four typologies are reviewed here in order to gain a general perspective of how these types of artifacts have been defined. Nearly three decades ago the Biblical Archaeology Review requested Lamoine DeVries to write an article on “Israelite incense stands.” DeVries quickly discovered that trying to define the scope of the subject as well as function(s) of these architectural models, which include cult stands, model shrines, and incense stands, was in his words, “bewildering.” In his 1987 article, DeVries stated that it was foolish to try and comprehend them without taking into account the broad context of diverse cultures in which they have been found (DeVries 1987: 27). He ended up creating a typology based on material and form, differentiating as six types (1987: 28-29): 1) cylindrical stands, appearing in one and two piece forms (such as having a bowl at the top), often being fenestrated and adorned with iconography; 2) rectangular or square-shaped stands with one to three stories, commonly referred to as model shrines and are “easily recognizable,” (having squared windows and doors) as a house; 3) limestone stands that can be cylindrical or square, including horned altars; 4) bronze tripod stands; 5) bronze, square, openwork stands; and finally, 6) small cuboid stands used for burning incense and other aromatics.

While architectural models from Jordan primarily fall into DeVries’ types 1, 2, 3, and 6, this dissertation will be dealing mainly with those objects that have traditionally been placed into the category known as model shrines; squared or rectangular shaped objects resembling a house complete with openings similar to windows and doors (DeVries’ type 2). However, we must take into consideration type 1, as it is often

impossible to determine if the artifact in question belonged to a model shrine or cylindrical cult stand.

DeVries gives basic examples for each of his categories as the topic is broad. He then supports his conclusions that all of these types of model shrines and cult stands were used in cultic ritual by drawing on Biblical texts and images preserved from several ancient Near Eastern cultures including Mesopotamian cylinder seals, many of which feature offering scenes in which stands are set between two deities (Ward: 1910: p. 360, no. 1233). While DeVries' article does a great job at covering the corpus of architectural models, most of the focus is spent on a broad overall analysis of offering stands used by the ancient Israelites, corroborating Biblical texts, and probable meaning based on these texts. His article, although certain in its conclusions, was one of the first to open the eyes of scholars to the subject of these enigmatic objects, all the while leaving one with more questions than answers.

Since DeVries' article, more scholars have attempted to categorize architectural models into concrete classifications. However, the issues that continually crop up when trying to establish an all-around criteria have led many scholars to end up discussing the complex world of architectural models in broader terms without a detailed typological system. In 1991, Joachim Bretschneider (1991a; 1991b) discussed model shrines and cult stands in the ancient Near East from the Neolithic period up through the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C.E. Proceeding chronologically and moving from site to site and object to object, he drew upon a broad corpus of examples from the Mesopotamia regions, Syria, the Aegean, and the Levant. Particular emphasis was placed on construction and the religious aspects of these objects, and a loose definition of architectural models was given as minute

representations of sacred architecture (Bretschneider 1991b: 14). Several architectural models thought to have originated in Jordan were described, but being unprovenanced, they will only be referred to in this study for iconographical comparisons.

Typologies have also been created specifically for certain sites. These typologies can be very helpful for specific studies, but obviously are limited for broad research. A good example of a site-specific typology can be found in the work of Peter Werner concerning the cult stands of Tell Mumbaqa (Werner 1998: 1). Werner defined the objects using the term “architectural models” and identified three types by form: 1) tower models – this definition seems to relate to the overall height of the model and not its function; 2) house models – only a few fragments were used to describe this category which included one story fenestrated models; and, 3) shrine models – this term was not given to denote the function of these objects as shrines *per se*, but rather to indicate models with a doorway that could be closed.

Even though Werner provided architectural terms for these objects, he is quick to point out that none of these cult objects represented actual towers, houses, or temples, but were rather defined as such based on their overall appearance in relation to real architectural forms. Werner did not give a clear, prescribed, criteria for each type, but his straightforward method seems to work well for the assemblage found at Tell Mumbaqa. Werner’s simple typology is appealing when considering a typology for the study put forth in this dissertation, which lacks the confusing subgroups and exceptions one must consider when dealing with architectural models as an overall group.

Beatrice Muller first established a comprehensive classification of architectural models from the ancient Near East in the late 1990s. Her impressive work, *Les*

*"maquettes architecturales" du proche-orient ancien: Mésopotamie, Syrie, Palestine du IIe au milieu du Ier millénaire* (2002), continues to be the most comprehensive study of ancient Near Eastern ceramic architectural models to date and is considered the standard work referred to by most scholars when writing about them. Surprisingly, even though Muller discusses what in 2002 what was assumed to be the entire known Near Eastern assemblage over several millennia, her catalogue only holds 178 objects. Her exclusion of many objects, primarily rounded forms, eliminates many pot-shaped shrines<sup>17</sup> and rounded model shrines (although she acknowledges them), but her focus on architectural aspects is crucial for understanding the typology especially of squared model shrines, and all the problems that accompany the attempts to categorize them neatly into one comprehensive database.

Muller bases her typology on form and defines her study using the term “architectural models” and makes it clear that she is interested in the architectural qualities of these cultic objects (Muller 2002: 81). She identified four basic types represented in the Transjordan region (Muller 1997: 255): 1) fenestrated multi-storied models; 2) towers; 3) one-room *naïskoi* or pot-shaped “shrines” (Figure 1.4) and, 4) and small niches.

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<sup>17</sup> A pot-shaped shrine, or pot shrine, is a model shrine that originated as a pot thrown on a potter’s wheel. It has the definitive finger marks of a wheel-thrown receptacle. These pots were then removed from the wheel and manipulated to form a model.



Figure 1.4. An Iron Age II model shrine (pot model) from Tell Rehov (<http://museum.imj.org.il/imagery/galleries/viewItemE.asp?case=3&itemNum=372506>).

According to Muller, architectural models from the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium B.C.E. appear to be replicas of actual houses that do not necessarily represent a religious or cultic intent, while those from the second and 1<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C.E. appear to be closely related to cultic activities and therefore are in a different class. Overall, although Muller’s typologies represent the most detailed and thorough examination of the subject to date, the very nature of the vast amount of data makes her work extremely complex and often difficult to follow.

#### Typologies of the Southern Levant

The subsequent studies are dedicated primarily to architectural models from the Southern Levant. While three of these typologies concern objects from Israel/Palestine, they are nevertheless important for the parallels they may offer for architectural models in Jordan. Four scholars are presented here.

Pierre de Miroschedji does not favor the term “architectural models,” stating that the term is one scholars use for convenience. According to him, these objects were not intended to represent buildings in a realistic manner, therefore it would be better, in his



opinion, to avoid the term (2001: 44, 78). De Miroschedji proposes what he calls a functional typology of three categories: 1) ceramic ossuaries of the Late Chalcolithic period, which are found in tombs and are allegedly related to ancestor worship; 2) offering stands, mostly from the Late Bronze and Iron Ages and display architectural features, likely embodying the temple of a fertility goddess; and, 3) tabernacles that “were conceived” as miniature sanctuaries of a female deity, which should not be misinterpreted as copies of actual buildings, but rather as symbolic receptacles for divine figures or divine presence.

In this final category, de Miroschedji has grouped together many shapes that are separated by other scholars. It is here however, that the glaring differences and difficulties of utilizing a functional typology become palpable. De Miroschedji is the only scholar to include Chalcolithic ossuaries in the discussion of architectural models; objects that are wholly eliminated in time, meaning, and context from later architectural model studies. They are included in his study for the sole reason that they resemble houses. Because of this inclusion, de Miroschedji is compelled to include Herodian period ossuaries from Palestine, but he does so only in reference as they have no real direct relation with other architectural models (De Miroschedji 2001: 47).

Difficulties also arise in the category of “offering stands.” Here, de Miroschedji divides the category into subtypes consisting of 2A - round pedestal bowls, 2B - open stands, and 2C - rectangular stands with a straight top. The question of what separates a cult stand from a model shrine becomes clouded as his study aims to investigate the architectural models which are more commonly called model shrines. If cult stands are distinguished as being a part of the study because their iconography comes in the form of

painted design and molded figures, then it should be more clearly stated and addressed in a separate study. However, as cult stands are commonly associated with having the main function of an offering stand for incense, sacrificial gifts, or libation, they do not have the same function as model shrines, which seem to have the purpose of housing a divine entity or figure (Kletter, *et al.* 2010: 30). If de Miroschedji's logic of similar iconography is to be relied upon as a reason for inclusion in the study, then the corpus should be expanded to include all kinds of objects that functioned as cultic supports. This would include stone and clay altars, pillars or columns, and anything having a concrete architectural definition.

The results of de Miroschedji's study add greatly to our continuing understanding of these types of objects, but his typology stops short of providing a substantial basis for the study of these objects from Jordan. Including objects from Chalcolithic periods up through the Early Roman period deals with thousands of years which brings into question the functionality of these objects remaining similar as the concepts of "ancestral cults" and "fertility goddess" are ambiguous and open to a wide variety of interpretations.

A recent comprehensive study of cultic stands from the Southern Levant can be found in the Ph.D thesis of Hava Katz who discusses 87 architectural models from the Late Bronze and Iron Ages. Katz explains that the division into typological groups is complex at best; "almost every scholar who has dealt with the subject has developed his own categorization, based mainly on examples from cultures outside Eretz-Israel, and every typology has its problems" (Katz 2006: 3). Katz goes on to dismiss typologies from well-established forms by Muller (2001: 192), and others and distinguishes four main types with the statement that there is no clear-cut division between types and the

exceptions within each type group. Her four typology groups are as follows: 1) architectural models that imitate houses and shrines; 2) jar-shaped models; 3) models with elaborate façades; 4) and tower-shaped models.

While Katz states that her types follow the principle of an order of forms from “open to closed,” this seems incomplete if one is simply defining a form by what it appears to imitate. Furthermore, Katz fails to adequately state the standards of her typology. As she herself states, there is no clear-cut division between distinctions in these architectural models.

Ziony Zevit dedicates a significant portion of his 2001 book, “Religions of Ancient Israel”, to architectural models. He characterizes the main differences between model shrines and cult stands by first reviewing cult stands by site and discussing the multitude of varieties of design and fenestrations to the point that Iron Age craftsmen, “possessed a range of conventional designs from which they could draw” (Zevit 2001: 314). Regardless of the vast variety in shape and decoration, the main function of a stand for offering, libation, or incense remains clear. He sums up by stating that cult stands, while having architectural features of temples, were not realistic replicas of them. Zevit then goes on to describe model shrines and the main difference that separates them from cult stands; the fact that they were not intended to function as a stand. Using the Megiddo models as an example (Figure 1.5), he states that he believes the Megiddo models were shaped like actual buildings and thus represented real structures (Zevit 2001: 326-27).



Figure 1.5: An Iron Age I cult stand from Megiddo.  
(<http://museum.imj.org.il/Imagine/galleries/viewItemE.asp?case=3&itemNum=371487>).

To date, only one article has been written that attempts to categorize architectural models, specifically model shrines, from the country of Jordan. *Ceramic Architectural Models from Transjordan and the Syrian Tradition*, written by Michele Daviau (2008), draws upon Muller's typology to create a basic categorization of selected model shrines. Daviau's typology can be described by the following categories: 1) multi-storied fenestrated and non-fenestrated models; including house models with attached figures and modeled or painted iconography; 2) tower models; including models that are tall with multiple stories or registers; 3) pot shrines; including objects that originated as a wheel thrown pot that was manipulated into a model shrine; 4) and cultic niches; models which are smaller with a large, dominant opening that often takes up the entire front of the model.

Daviau has also written other articles mentioning model shrines, accompanying iconography, and religious beliefs that may have surrounded them. According to Daviau, only four types from Muller's typology (Muller 1997: 255) are represented in Jordan; the

fenestrated two-story house, the decorated tower, the one-room *naïskos*, and the pot shrine (Daviau 2008: 299). As Daviau's studies have focused on model shrines, cult stands are not taken into account for comparison. Since her 2008 article, multiple other architectural models and their fragments have come to light in recent excavations; many of which are discussed in this study.

### Other Studies

Garth Gilmour (1996: 226-36) separated model shrines and cult stands by form into three types: 1) round or cylindrical; 2) rectangular or "box-shaped or house type;" 3) and rectangular "Ta'anach type," which is comparable to the box-shaped type but has multi levels.

Gilmour's simplified typology focuses mostly on architectural models appearing during the Iron Age. His third category includes stands that appear at Ta'anach, Megiddo, a few more sites in Israel, and from Pella in Jordan. This is important as the cult stand from Khirbat 'Ataruz, that will be discussed later, falls into the third category. In addition, the closest parallel from the country of Jordan can be found in the Pella models.

Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger (1998: 154-63) discuss cult stands in their examination of the Ta'anach stands. However, their concern focuses on the iconographical aspects and not on typology. As this dissertation focuses heavily on iconography found on these cultic objects, Keel and Uehlinger was especially referred to for their expertise in this area.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> See Keel's consummate work on symbolism in his, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World* (1997).

Christian Frevel, while offering no formal typology, writes on cult stands from Israel and Palestine mainly concerning aspects of function and symbolism (Frevel 2003: 152, 155). He sees most cult stands as offering stands and describes simple, round stands with no iconography as having a mainly functional purpose while the more elaborate, often rectangular and decorative stands as having the additional purpose of communicating an ideology (Frevel 2008: 25-48).

Lastly, the impressive volume from Tell Yavneh illuminates in detail the massive *favissa* of cult stands uncovered recently from the ‘Temple Hill’ Repository Pit. Dating to the Iron Age, these cult stands provide for the first time a unique opportunity to define and create an artistic canon of style specific to the Philistines (Kletter, Ziffer and Zwickel 2010).

### Summation of Typologies

The above gives a comprehensive overview of the various typologies that currently exist concerning architectural models. Some concern typologies where shape of the objects is paramount, while others have focuses on a smattering of “styles”. It is clear that the vast variety is complex and confusing. The discussion that needs to take place is the fact that all of these architecture models tend to defy categorization as the individuality of each object becomes apparent. Is it possible to create one overarching typography of all architectural models from the ancient Near East? Beatrice Muller has come admirably close and the overwhelming challenge has not deterred the intrepid attempts by many other scholars who continue to pursue this endeavor. However, instead of trying to “reinvent the wheel” and address all the architectural models in general, it is the conclusion of this introduction that one universal typography may be impossible and

furthermore, unnecessary. Therefore, one of the goals of this study is to create a typology addressing the specific area of Transjordan, or rather the country of Jordan; starting with the Madaba Plains region that can be adapted and added to as new research comes to light. Each scholar who has written on the subject of architectural models has developed his or her own categorization based on examples from numerous sites mostly within ancient Palestine, unprovenanced models, or on a specific set of standards such as form or function. Thus, every typology presents a problem when dealing with specifics of artifacts at chosen sites, specifically those within Jordan. The subsequent typology addresses shape/type, as well as ornamentation, a category that has not been encountered in the study of architectural model typographies as of yet.

### **The Madaba Plains Architectural Model Typology**

The proposed typology presented here will serve to classify the architectural models from two sites within the Madaba Plains region in Jordan, Tall al-‘Umayri and Khirbet ‘Ataruz. Included in the typology for these artifacts are three categories under the heading Shapes/Types: 1) **Model Shrines**; as defined by any models having an obvious main opening or “door”, 2) **Cult Stands**; as defined by having the main purpose of supporting an offering bowl or platform on the “roof,” and, 3) **Undetermined**; as defined by fragments clearly belonging to an architectural model as evidenced by a corner base or partially preserved architectural element, but without enough attributes to determine whether or not the object is a Model Shrine, or Cult Stand.

The correlate of Model Shrine and Cult Stand is that all of these objects have at least one attribute that can be considered “architectural” in nature, thus the term “architectural models.” For example, even the most simple of model shrines have an

opening that is typically referred to by the architectural term, “door.” This may be the only attribute it has, but the fact that there is a large opening leading to an interior, places it in the category of model shrine. Model shrines can be rounded, squared, and rectangular in shape. They can have multiple fenestrations or one single “door.” Some are plain and some are highly decorated with paint or applied figures and designs. Cult stands, in contrast, can have a roof that resembles a four-horned altar, a flat roof, or have an open “roof” that supports a removable (or in some cases, attached) bowl. They too can be cylindrical, squared, highly decorated, or plain in appearance. The common factor that places them all in the cult stand category is the fact that they all seem to be receptacles for some kind of offering, libation, or incense that is placed on the “roof” or in a bowl.

By placing all architectural models and their fragments into three shape/type categories that are determined primarily by function as confirmed by the above attributes, a more streamlined typology can be created. Because of the individual nature of each of the architectural models and fragments chosen for detailed study, it is clear that the architectural models in Transjordan were not subject to mass production or a strict artistic canon of style. Even though only two sites have been studied in detail, the above recognitions permit a typology to be created that can be easily adapted for the inclusion of subsequent discoveries and studies of architectural models within the Transjordanian region.

In addition to Shape/Type, all architectural models are also addressed under the heading of Ornamentation. Subcategories under this heading address the main types of ornamentation commonly found on architectural models of the Levant. The two headings of Shape/Type and Ornamentation are subdivided to allow for the main aspects of



architectural models that most other scholars have attempted to include into one overreaching typology, or into multiple confusing categories. Architectural models need to be addressed first according to their overall shape and thus, type. Once this is established, the ornamentation, or lack thereof, may be addressed. The architectural models and their fragments that are included in this study will be placed into the proposed Madaba Plains Architectural Model Typology. The following will identify and define each of the sub-categories under the heading of Shape/Type.

### Shape/Type

This heading has three categories that are divided into sub-categories according to their specific shape/type that correspond to the architectural models that have been detected in the Madaba Plains region, specifically at the two sites being studied in this dissertation; Tall al-‘Umayri and Khirbet ‘Ataruz. Room for additional sub-categories can easily be inserted as additional research reveals more information. Under the heading of Shape/Type are the categories of; 1) Model Shrine, 2) Cult Stand, 3) Undetermined, which accounts for those models that could be either a model shrine or cult stand of either a cylindrical or slab construction (although sometimes it is possible to determine a slab construction). This category is usually used for single fragments of architectural models.

The two main categories under Shape/Type are the Model Shrine and Cult Stand and are described in detail along with their sub-categories as follows. A Model Shrine is defined as a circular or squared “room” that may have one or two stories. It is characterized primarily by a large opening in the front that functions as an entryway or “door.” This entrance can either be plain or flanked by two figures. The primary function of these models seems to entail a large interior, easily accessed in the front so that either a

separate figurine could be placed inside, or the interior remains empty. Either way, model shrines typically resemble houses and/or temples and seem to have the intention of being a symbolic residence for a female deity as Beatrice Muller suggests with her many references to Astarte, Ashtoreth, and Asherah residing within or being represented through the iconography found on model shrines (Muller 2002: 164-47).

Three sub-categories under the category of Model Shrine are given as, 1) **Pot Model**; as defined by any model shrine that was formed on a potter's wheel and originated as a pot that was then manipulated through the cutting of a doorway and/or other fenestrations. The top of the pot was usually sealed off and the overall shape of the model was domed. Another sub-category is, 2) **Slab Model**; as defined by a model shrine made up of slabs of clay, usually rolled out to a uniform thickness much like one would roll out pie dough, that were then wet-joined together to form walls that resemble an architectural structure. These types of models usually had an open top or no roof and sometimes had no floor as well. The last subcategory is, 3) **Niche Model**; as defined by a characteristically small shape, similar to a shoebox or smaller, with surrounding walls, a floor, and an open front, which was often flanked by figures. The name comes from the appearance of the shrine to a niche found in a wall, and scars on the interiors of some of these shrines give evidence that they possibly once held attached figures within (Daviau 2008: 298).

The second category of architectural models are the Cult Stands. There are only two sub-categories here as the corpus of material from Jordan is limited. Cult stands can be described as architectural models that are typically taller than they are wide with a flat "roof" resembling a horned altar, such as the cult stand from Pella, Jordan (Potts,

Colledge, and Edwards 1985: 204), or with an open top that may have supported a bowl or platter of some sort. They can also have the appearance of two stories, such as the Large Cult Stand of 'Ataruz (see Chapter 6). The main intent of cult stands however, remains somewhat unclear. While they are often referred to in literature as incense stands, their often-decorative structures may have limited their use due to the expense or time it took to make them (Gilmour 2014: 85). Consequently, they were likely restricted to temples (Gilmour 2014: 85), even if those temples were simple and far removed from the primary temple of the region (i.e., the temple at Jerusalem). Other possibilities for use include serving as special containers or platforms for food offerings, libations, plant offerings, or offerings of sacred trees (Meyers 2003: 75). Often cylindrical, cult stands can have fenestrations that resemble architectural features such as doorways and windows, but there seems to be no obvious or large main entryway. However, flanking figures can occur.

The two sub-categories for Cult Stands include 1) **Cylindrical Stands**; as defined by their cylindrical shape which is usually made on a potter's wheel (Figures 1.6 and 1.7), and; 2) **Slab Stands**; as defined by stands that are constructed out of individual slabs of clay joined together to form a squared or rectangular shape.



Figure 1.6: A cult stand from Beth Shean, Iron Age I, featuring an open, rounded top and decorated with snakes and birds. ([http://www.cmaa-museum.org/cmaa\\_lecture\\_75-76.html](http://www.cmaa-museum.org/cmaa_lecture_75-76.html))

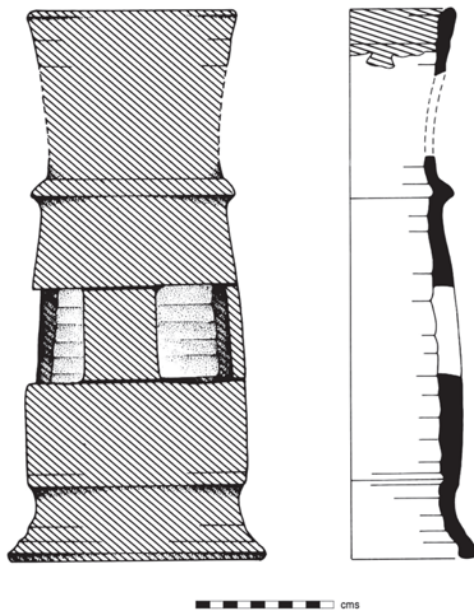


Figure 1.7: A Late Iron Age cult stand from Gezer showing fenestrations (drawing by D. Kargas, Gilmour 2014: 82).

## Ornamentation

Under the Ornamentation heading, six categories are given. After establishing if an architectural model is a model shrine, a cult stand, or concluding that the architectural model fragment is not able to be determined, ornamentation can be addressed. An architectural model may have only one of these sub-categories applicable, or several. This typological system allows for a better customization of identification for each architectural model. The six sub-categories are: 1) **Fenestration(s)**; as defined by any architectural model featuring cut-out openings resembling windows. Fenestrations do not include doorways or entryways; 2) **Painted Design**; as defined by any hand-painted treatment of symbols, animals, humans, deities, etc.; 3) **Applique Design**; as defined by attached or molded elements such as rope molding, or other design elements that are pressed into the model creating a low-relief effect; 4) **Incised Design**; as defined by any motif that is inscribed into the clay using a sharpened tool, usually found in the form of abstract elements; 5) **Attached Figures**; as defined by flanking figurines at the entrance of a model shrine or animals that are often found on both model shrines and cult stands. These figures are almost always made separately, sometimes in a mold, and applied to the model after its construction. The last sub-category is, 6) **None**; as defined by any architectural model that is devoid of any ornamentation whatsoever.

The above typology will serve the architectural models that have been identified for this study. The advantage of this typology is that it addresses not only Shape/Type, but Ornamentation as well. It also separates model shrines from cult stands and clearly defines each according to its specific shape and ornamentation. As mentioned before, this typology is also intended to be adaptable as new data comes to light. Below is a flowchart

(Figure 1.8) to better facilitate the visualization of how the Madaba Plains Architectural Model Typology is organized.

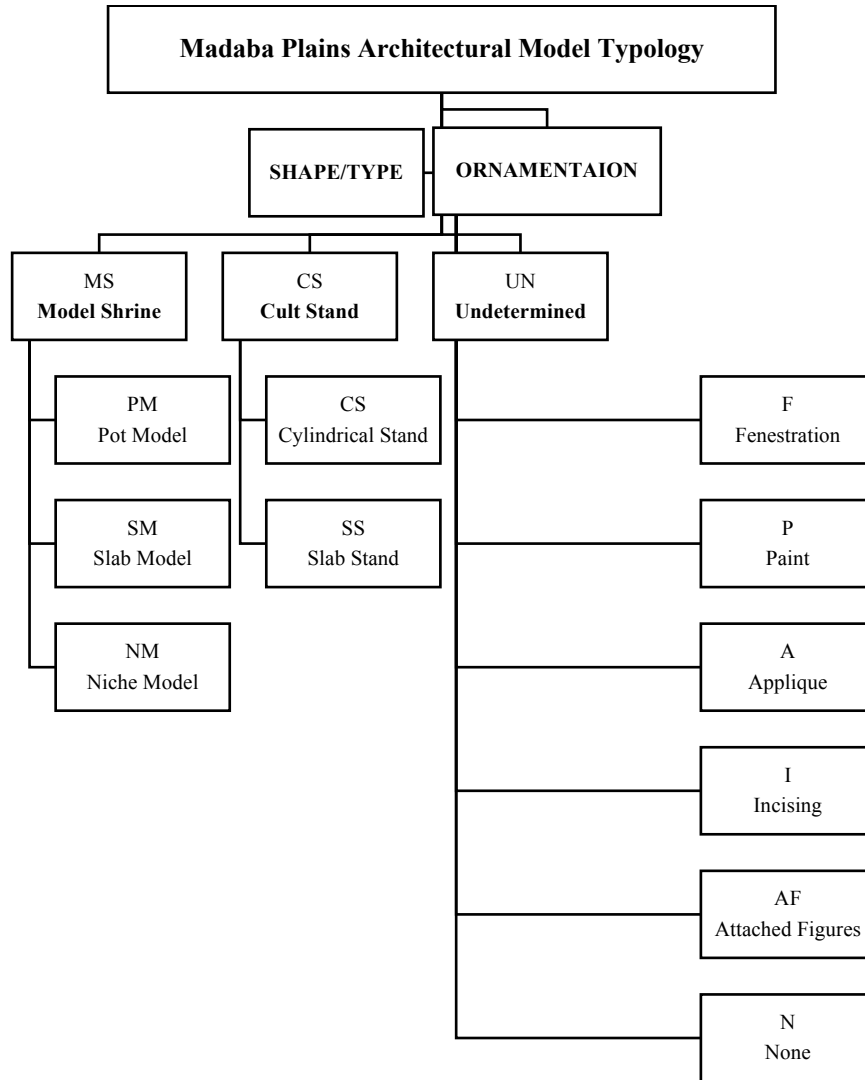


Figure 1.8: Flowchart of the Madaba Plains Architectural Model Typology (chart by the author).

For ease of use, a table (Table 1) has been created that will appear with every object and fragment description in the following chapters. Henceforth, the Madaba Plains Architectural Model Typology will be referred to as MP AMT.

The typology of a given architectural model could be as follows: MS(NM)/AF. This would translate to an assigned category of Model Shrine that is sub-categorized categorized as a Niche Model and having Ornamentation in the way of Attached Figures

Table 1  
MP AMT Table

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
MS – Model Shrine	PM – Pot Model	F – Fenestration(s)
	SM – Slab Model	P – Paint
	NM – Niche Model	A – Applique
CS – Cult Stand	CS – Cylindrical Stand	I – Incising
	SS – Slab Stand	AF – Attached Figures
UN – Undetermined		N - None

If a plausible identification of either a Model Shrine or Cult Stand is not possible but Ornamentation is visible, the following typology might look like this: UN/F. This would indicate that it is Undetermined (UN) to conclude with any certainty whether the Fenestration (F) came from a model shrine or cult stand. Another possibility is that there is no decoration on an architectural model. In this instance, an object could be described as MS(NM)/N, indicating that this is a known Model Shrine (MS) falling into the Niche Model (NM) sub-category, but that it is lacking in any Ornamentation (N).

## Research Methods

### Scope and Delimitations

This research is limited to architectural models originating in Transjordan, specifically two sites within the Madaba Plains region, Tall al-‘Umayri and Khirbet ‘Ataruz. While all-known architectural models and potential fragments from these two sites will be incorporated into tables, in-depth analysis will take place only on the more

complete models coming from the controlled excavations of the sites. The purpose here is not an exhaustive research of all known architectural model from Transjordan, but rather an analysis of architectural models and fragments from the sites of Tall al-‘Umayri and Khirbet ‘Ataruz, as the selected material studied here comes from controlled excavations and much of it has not been published.

The resulting research presented in this dissertation draws upon the previously mentioned typologies, but in particular the established typological categories by Muller (2002) and the study done by Daviau (2008). The result has been the author’s creation of a newer, more efficient typology in order to focus additional attention on ornamentation, or iconographical categorization.

The biggest challenge in accomplishing the research has been locating and acquiring access to each architectural model, including fragments, from the sites of Tall al-‘Umayri and Khirbet ‘Ataruz. The majority of the architectural model fragments from Tall al-‘Umayri are located at The Center for Near Eastern Archaeology on the campus of La Sierra University, but some are located in Jordan and were discovered to have been missing. Travel to Jordan in order to research the architectural models in-country, primarily those from Khirbet ‘Ataruz, resulted in permissions from the Department of Antiquity to take all the known architectural models from the site of Khirbet ‘Ataruz back to Andrews University in order that extensive study and restoration could take place.

The limited corpus of available physical material thus has resulted in a limited focus for extensive analysis and the resulting selection of Tall al-‘Umayri and Khirbet ‘Ataruz for focused study due to the unprecedented number of and unpublished nature of so many architectural models and their fragments.



## Methodology

Only three scholars have studied architectural models from Transjordan extensively; Beatrice Muller, whose work done entirely in French, and is considered the preeminent source for all archaeologists when referencing research for model shrines in the ancient Near East, Jochim Bretschneider, whose German volume attempts to do what was later done on a larger and more thorough scale by Muller, and finally P. M. Michele Daviau, who has adapted Muller's typology to reference selected model shrines specific to Jordan. While Daviau has created a simple classification system as evidenced in her article *Ceramic Architectural Models from Transjordan and the Syrian Tradition* (Daviau 2008: 293-308), she has not comprehensively identified each architectural model from Jordan by shape/type or ornamentation as this was not her goal. Nevertheless, she has done the most research on architectural models in Jordan, specifically from the Madaba Plains region.

Other authors that will be consulted have written on architectural models within the context of specific archaeological excavation seasons. These reports provide context for provenanced architectural models and allow comparisons within the archaeological record. Thorough review of the extant literature allows expansion or clarification on specific positions scholars have on these objects.

The conceptual framework to be used will include formal art-historical analysis<sup>19</sup> along with a discussion about style. The required knowledge base includes a thorough background in iconographical symbolism and language as well as a background in art-

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<sup>19</sup> The goal of a formal analysis in art history is to describe how the formal elements of design in an artwork, i.e. line, color, texture, shape, and space, affect the depiction of the subject matter - in this case the iconographical motifs used – and to communicate how this affects the artwork's expressive content.

historical research and analysis which the author of this dissertation possesses.

Experience in archaeological fieldwork and knowledge of the archaeological record of Transjordan from the Bronze and Iron Ages is also important, as is a familiarity with the religious beliefs of the ancient cultures living in and near the area such as the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites. The author of this dissertation has been involved in twelve archaeological excavations to date in the countries of Jordan, Israel, and Italy.

Research was conducted by traveling to various locations within Jordan in order to visually inspect, photograph, and conserve as many of these architectural models from Jordan as possible, given that the models themselves are the primary sources. Art-historical analysis was then conducted from close observation. Much of the research however is documentary in nature as the models were extensively studied, photographed, drawn, and conserved.

Secondary sources come from field reports and articles concerning specific architectural models as well as from articles and books pertaining to the objects and iconography in the surrounding regions. These resources come from established and respected publications including *ADAJ*, *AUSS*, *BAS*, *BASOR*, and *NEAS*. Because scholars have come to various conclusions about architectural models in general, the art-historical analysis being used serves as a basis for qualitative and cognitive approaches to proposed meaning and use of these architectural models. A qualitative approach to research allows a broader, more theoretical investigation into the social world and culture in which these architectural models were created, as people's motivations, behaviors, and beliefs were manifested in cultic artifacts. The cognitive approach involves a study of human behavior. In this case, the formal analysis aids in understanding the artisans and

their surrounding world in order to infer conclusions. This dissertation deals with objects that have an enigmatic aura about them, thus both a qualitative and cognitive approach, which are interdisciplinary in nature, allows for ambiguity and any missing context for these architectural models while still relying on scientific evidence as produced by controlled excavations.

After documentation, selected architectural models and their fragments were analyzed according to the principles of art-historical research which include: a) a detailed description of appearance; b) iconographical analysis; c) comparison to architectural models within the surrounding region; d) comparison with available archaeological records; e) resulting conclusions about the iconography, creation, use, and proposed cultic practices that may have surrounded the artifacts.

### **Conclusion**

The concept of art and aesthetics is not new to archaeology, but few discussions seem to focus on the formal analysis of an object and link this analysis to the understanding the object may have produced upon the original artisans and patrons under their given cultural circumstances. There is also a lack of understanding when it comes to the use of the word “style” as it applies to archaeological objects (“Style” will be discussed in Chapter 2). It is because of this lack of attention to iconographical analysis and comparisons of the architectural models of Transjordan that an art-historical formal analysis has been conducted. This type of analysis involves the systematic description of an art object or artifact in order to lay the ground work for qualitative and cognitive suggestions. The art historian seeks answers first by questioning the artifact itself, and then looks to outside sources for comparison (D'Alleva 2010: 17-22). Because some of

the more complete models from Transjordan are unprovenanced, adequate context is lacking making formal analysis ideal for future study. In this way, the physical appearance can be analyzed and compared to studied examples and iconographical data of provenanced model shrines. As this study will be dealing with provenanced architectural models, analysis will help prepare the way for more extensive and solid research on those architectural models that have questionable histories. It is from controlled excavations that we can best hope to make more confident statements on definitions and functions of these objects.

The following chapter will delve deeper into the meaning and use of architectural models and their relationship to religion as well as the unique role woman may have had in their creation and use based on existing research. Issues concerning “style” and the establishment of a recognized artistic canon and the artists who created these architectural models will also be addressed.

## CHAPTER 2

### ARCHITECTURAL MODEL DEFINITIONS, FUNCTIONS, AND THE QUESTION OF STYLE

In this chapter the possible uses and functions of architectural models and a background to the religious practices of the people of the Levant will be discussed as well as an in-depth look at the problems with style and why an artistic canon is so difficult to establish in Transjordan. Consideration will also be given to the artisans who created these objects as well as a discussion on artistic motifs found on architectural models in an often-incomprehensible array of styles.

#### **Possible Use and Function**

While architectural models by themselves reveal little about how they were used, depictions of them have been found on seal impressions, reliefs, and paintings that in turn could shed light on their intended use. Cylindrical stands are well-attested in Egypt and Mesopotamia in seal carvings and wall reliefs and paintings, where they often appear before a seated deity or king as a receptacle for libations or various offerings of food (DeVries 1987: 34-35). For example, house-shaped (rectangular or square) shrines or stands have been depicted in various rituals on Babylonian cylinder seals where they seem to be involved in rituals related to agriculture (DeVries 1987: 34-35).

A possible interpretation of cult stands is that they were clay versions of pedestals or thrones of cult statues inside of temples (Keel 1977: 23-35). Perhaps the presence of female figurines that often flank the entrance to model shrines are comparable to those figures from the facades of temples, or to symbols of a deity that could be comparable to the glazed brick decoration of the Ishtar gates in Babylon (Kletter, Ziffer and Zwickel 2006: 151).

While some architectural models are plain and without ornamentation, some are prolifically embellished with incising, applique, paint, and attached figures. The full meaning behind ornamentation or why it was that some models were left plain while others were profusely covered with iconographical motifs is not yet understood. However, as will be discussed later in this chapter, it is clear that the artisans working on the architectural models left at 'Ataruz and 'Umayri, selected motifs from a strong religious repertoire that was far from random. The use of mixed motifs from various cultures nevertheless created unique forms that resist categorization by style.

Unfortunately, there is little to no evidence of any ancient textual source discussing the creation or use of architectural models in general - specifically from the Transjordan region. However, the Bible does mention incense stands and warns about offering strange incense on altars.<sup>1</sup> As cult stands were often used for libations, offerings, and the burning of offerings and incense, we can infer that the writers of the Old Testament were familiar with these objects. Biblical references to the worship of Ba'al

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<sup>1</sup> The book of Exodus gives references to incense and the burning of incense on altars made of wood and gold. See Exod 30:9, and 37:25.

and Asherah, gods to whom these architectural models may have been dedicated, are mentioned frequently as are practices that were fervently condemned.<sup>2</sup>

The way in which architectural models functioned is another complex issue fraught with differing opinions that only serve to confirm that scholars really do not have a full understanding of their meaning and use. While it is possible, and even likely, that cult stands served the purpose of providing a surface for burnt offerings, or at least a surface upon which to hold a bowl or container in which incense or libations were placed, possible functions in terms of model shrines are less secure. It is possible that they were votive items and had no other function in ritual once offered to a temple or sanctuary complex. It has been suggested that the famous Ta'anach cult stands were used as pedestals for cult images in the way that a model shrine might have been a "house" for a figurine (Beck 2002: 392-418). As the Ta'anach stands each have a solid roof, they could have, in theory, supported an image. This is only speculation however. Many cult stands, like the one found at Megiddo (Muller 2002: fig. 146) have an open top and thus could not hold a figurine, although it is plausible that a large bowl intended for offerings could have been placed on the top.

Regardless of their ambiguous meaning and lack of textual evidence, Biblical or otherwise, the main reason for the conundrum surrounding the purpose and meaning of architectural models lies in the fragmentary nature of many of the finds, which makes it difficult to distinguish between that which was intended for public vs. private use. Fortunately, architectural models dating specifically to the Iron Age, whether whole or in

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<sup>2</sup> 2 Kgs 21:1-9 reveals that the then king of Judah, Manasseh, was prodigiously condemned for combining the worship of YHWH with practices of foreign gods.

fragments, have mostly been found in or near cultic installations which attests to them being used in community or public settings. An example can be found in fragments identified as belonging to a model shrine discovered next to a standing stone at an Iron Age I open cultic site located on the summit of a ridge in the northern part of the Samaria hills (Mazar 1982: 27-36).

Architectural models have also been found in or near religious courts or sanctuaries, such as the open air courtyard at Tall al-‘Umayri (Herr and Clark 2003: 289-93) (discussed at length in succeeding chapters), and temples, such as the fragments of five model shrines that were uncovered near a temple from Iron Age Megiddo in 1903 (Ussishkin 1989: 166-65). Another example is an assemblage of unique cultic objects from Tel Rehov, which included cult stands and model shrines. These artifacts have been identified as reflecting the local religious traditions in the ancient city during the 10<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.E. (Mazar and Panitz-Cohen 2008: 40-42). When combined with the pictorial evidence of the use of architectural models on seals and reliefs, the presence of these artifacts in Iron Age cultic sites can assuredly place them in a religious context.

One of the best examples of a cult stand from Israel is the above mentioned now famous Ta’anach Stand (Figure 2.1). Four tiers of puzzling scenes embellish this 10<sup>th</sup>-century B.C.E. stand, which is now considered one of the most iconographically elaborate artifacts ever discovered in Israel. Images on the Ta’anach Stand include ibex or gazelles, lions, cherubim or sphinxes, a horse, trees, and female deities identified as Asherah. Excavated at Ta’anach in 1968, the clay stand measures 53.34 cm high and was probably used for religious offerings or libations (Smith 2002: 52-4). It has been suggested that these types of stands may have alternatively functioned to hold bowls of



fragrant oils used to anoint the body (Meinhardt 1996: 46). Likewise, similar models could have served as a pedestal for a statue or deity (Bloch-Smith 2013).



Figure 2.1. The Ta'anach Cult Stand (Glock 1997: 149).

Other suggestions have proposed that model shrines in particular were meant to represent a specific building or shrine that existed elsewhere or in the vicinity. Model shrines of this nature were intended to house portable images, icons, or other sacred objects (Zevit 2001: 332, 339). This concept may be explained in the same way one would look at a tourist's souvenir of the Eiffel Tower. It is not the real thing, but rather a representation that reminds one of the actual tower in Paris. Perhaps model shrines functioned in a similar manner in that the miniaturized portable buildings could act as a substitute for the actual shrine or temple. By replicating shrines or a temple in miniature, a worshiper could have indirect access to the actual sanctuary when a physical visit was

not possible. Aaron Burke agrees with this hypothesis and states that these model shrines may have served as a type of stand in for cult centers or sanctuaries that could not be regularly visited by most individuals (Burke 2011: 904). In this vein, these architectural models could be compared to the Early Dynastic period (2900-2350 B.C.E.) votive statues found in ancient Uruk, with the largest collection discovered at the site of Nippur at the base of a temple dedicated to the Sumerian goddess Inanna (Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art 2004). These votive statues are believed to have been stand-ins for the elite who commissioned images of themselves so that they could always be in the presence of the gods as access to the temple might be difficult for them.

Burke also highlights the idea of inaccessibility to the temple in Jerusalem with examples given by the Israelites during the Iron Age, reflecting the challenges of making ritual pilgrimages to Jerusalem. Burke continues by stating that traveling challenges could explain the proliferation of smaller cultic sites scattered all over the Transjordanian region where architectural models are more likely to be found (Burke 2011: 340, 904).

Regardless of their purpose, architectural models come in all shapes and sizes. Examples of Bronze Age shrines from Ugarit, Ashkelon, Tell Deir 'Alla, and Hazor, as well as Iron Age shrines from Tel Kinrot, Dan, Rehov, and Tel Hadar all share a rounded shape that is reminiscent of Cretan and Cypriot architectural models which were clearly influenced by the actual buildings found on Crete and Cyprus (Nissinen and Münger 2009: 137). Based on this evidence it could be concluded that similar models in Palestine may have been based on actual building shapes as well.

An early example of an architectural model dating to the Middle Bronze Age from the Hawran in Jordan could be a clue. In the 1995-96 seasons at the Middle Bronze

Age site of Rukays (Eames: 2004), a cylindrical ceramic vessel at Site 38 (Figure 2.2) was discovered in an unidentified floor deposit. Near the top of the vessel was an oval-

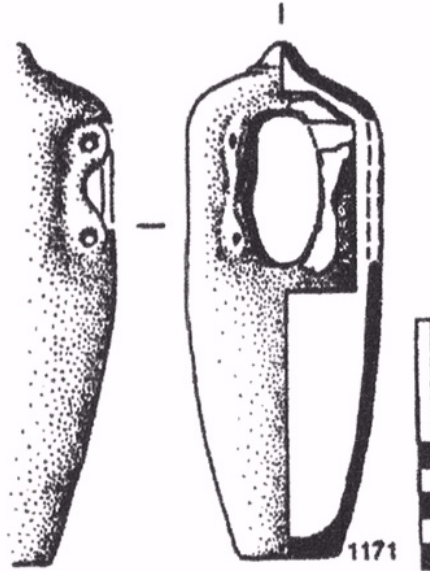


Figure 2.2. Drawing of the ceramic vessel from Site 38 at the Hawran (drawing from the University of Sydney Hawran Project, Eames 2004: fig. 8).

shaped opening or doorway with two raised, pierced flanges on the left-hand side, which likely served to keep a ceramic door in place. The vessel seems to bear a striking similarity to a group of vessels from Egypt collectively known as “model granaries,” which are miniature depictions of structures used for the storage of grain at Egyptians estates and houses. These model granaries first appeared in tombs from the First Dynasty and were a common architectural model style found throughout the remainder of ancient Egyptian civilization. Despite the differences and variations in appearances throughout the years they all served a single purpose; to serve the deceased with a ready supply of grain and food in the afterlife. As such, they performed a cultic role associated with burial practices (Eames 2004: 109-13).

The Hawran model shrine however, has been identified as having a religious purpose in spite of its similarity to Egyptian granary models. While the model granaries from Egypt fall into the category of representing an architectural building that is not a temple or shrine, comparative examples confidently identified as architectural models from the Levant can help tie in the cylindrical, beehive shape that was common to the Middle Bronze Age model from the Hawran and Egyptian model granaries, to those models that were explicitly intended for a cultic use.

Two vessels similar to the Hawran model were found at Hazor, one of which comes from the Temple in Area H, Stratum 1A (Yadin et al. 1960: 109). Four models come from the Deir 'Alla Late Bronze Age Sanctuary (Franken 1992: 28). Finally, the best example both chronologically and stylistically is the "Shrine of the Silver Calf," from the Ashkelon excavations (Figure 2.3).

The "Shrine of the Silver Calf" is a cylindrical model that bears a striking similarity to the Hawran model, and the addition of the silver calf inside attests to the possibility that the Hawran shrine and others could have also originally housed a figurine of some sort (Stager 1991: 24-43).

In contrast to the view that model shrines reflect actual buildings, some scholars suggest that the shapes of these models are symbolic in nature and reflect architectural space rather than actual building shape. This space was significant because of what happened therein, or who inhabited the space rather than the physical form of the structure itself (Mersereau 1993: 8-9).



Figure 2.3. The Ashkelon “Shrine of the Silver Calf” (photo by Ferrell Jenkins, 2013).

Regardless of the debate, many scholars seem to agree that model shrines in particular had the intention of housing something, whether it was a figurine or some other offering. Indeed, the now famous “Shrine of the Silver Calf,” discovered in 1990 among the ruins of a temple at Tel Ashkelon, is the only known instance in which the statue of an animal was actually discovered within its shrine (Stager 1991). The Ashkelon model firmly establishes the fact that at least some of these shrines were intended to hold a figure or figures of some sort.

Unfortunately, few architectural models have been properly published. This is due to the unprovenanced nature of several of the more complete models which are believed to have come from the antiquities market, therefore making their study objectionable to scholars (Barhama 2005: 23). As a result, these architectural models have been prolifically photographed, discussed and mentioned in minor articles, but detailed analysis and publications are avoided due to the fact that two of the major scholarly

associations of archaeologists in the United States reject the publication of looted artifacts in their journals (Dever 2008: 55). Dever notes however, that just because these looted objects lack context, it does not warrant them as worthless. Rather, a lot of useful data can be gleaned from an iconographical analysis. He goes on to say that, “once artifacts of such potential significance are known to the public, scholars have a right, perhaps even an obligation, to draw out their meaning” (Dever 2008: 57). And yet, most seem not to.

## **The Role of Religion**

### Israelite Folk Religion

It is necessary to briefly discuss Israelite religion and how it fits in with the religious practices of its surrounding neighbors in order to understand how architectural models accordingly fit within the religious cults of the Iron Age Levant, specifically those of Transjordan. Even though architectural models are found at sites all throughout the Levant that were not influenced or controlled by the Israelites, the two sites that this study focuses on, Tall al-‘Umayri and Khirbet ‘Ataruz, are postulated to have been settled at one time by the Israelite tribes of Reuben<sup>3</sup> and Gad<sup>4</sup> respectively. The influence of Israel and its religious practices would have been felt and known at these sites during the early Iron Age II; and this is the time frame in

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<sup>3</sup> According to L. Herr, although it is possible that ‘Umayri may have been settled by the Ammonites or even the Amorites, it is most likely that it was settled by the tribe of Reuben (Joshua 13: 8-10). In addition to the Biblical references, Herr and Clark cite ‘Umayri’s similar pottery and identical potter’s marks on jar handles to those found in known Israelite lands in Palestine. Excavations have also revealed a well preserved four-room house, a hallmark of Israelite architecture (Herr and Clark 2001).

<sup>4</sup> The Mesha Stele states in line 10, “now the men of Gad (had) dwelt in the land of ‘Atarot (‘Ataruz) from of old and the King of Israel built it for (them)” (Routledge 2004: 135). The Bible also states that the tribe of Gad settled on the east side of the Jordan River, placing them in the country of Jordan (Num 32).

which the majority of the architectural models and their fragments that are the subject of this study, fall. According to Routledge, the Bible indicates that,

...the formation of the kingdom of Israel is the centerpiece in which the fulfillment of YHWH's promise is given concrete form; what comes before is a preamble, what comes after is a long and painful object lesson in the virtues of obedience (Routledge 2017: 59).

From 1150 to 850 B.C.E., small and mid-sized kingdoms emerged throughout the Levant in the aftermath of the collapse of Late Bronze Age empires, along with the pressure induced by the re-emergence of Assyria (Routledge 2017: 59). Additionally stated by Routledge, these smaller Iron Age kingdoms had no set governmental structure that defined what exactly a king ruled over. Issues with self-legitimation along with vast structural diversity makes it hard to understand modes of social organization, kingship (Routledge 2017: 60), and in turn, religious practices that all seemed to share similar traditions. This complicates material culture. How does one determine if the artifacts discovered at Site X belong to the same ethnic group as those artifacts from Site Y, when they look the same, or strikingly similar? One way scholars have attempted to handle this is by dividing the Iron Age Levant into ethno-linguistic groups (Garr 1985; Lipiński 2000). These groups included the Neo-Hittites, Arameans, Phoenicians, Israelites, Judahites, Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, and the Philistines (Routledge 2017: 61). Due to the close proximity of each of these entities and the exchange of artisans between these kingdoms (as mentioned in 1 Kgs 5 and 6), it is to be expected that although they may have had different belief systems, they practiced those beliefs in a similar manner and the remains of that are the cultic objects we find at archaeological sites that share similar features, forms, styles, and motifs. This explains why a model shrine from a site

known to be occupied by the Israelites might have a markedly similar appearance or share related motifs to a model shrine found at a known Moabite site.

Due to the relative smallness of these kingdoms, such as the kingdom of Israel, it has become apparent through archaeological evidence, that common people practiced what William Dever calls “folk religion” (Dever 2005). This observed way of worshipping by the majority was strongly rejected by the Biblical writers of the divided monarchy period as one reads tale after tale of kings doing evil in the site of the Lord (often by the nascent influence of a foreign wife) only to later repent and discard all idolatrous cultic objects such as the case with Manasseh (2 Chron 33).

In the Bible, the frequent mention of Asherah (over 40 times), who was one of the oldest female goddesses in the ancient Near East (New Encyclopaedia Britannica 1992: 623-24), along with Astarte, the Canaanite goddess of love and fertility (Ackerman 2000a: 512) is attested by the many female figurines discovered at archaeological sites throughout the Levant. Asherah/Astarte figures not only appear as individually formed figurines, but also frequently appear on architectural models, especial model shrines. The fact that these figurines appear in areas settled by what not only the Bible considers “pagan” kingdoms (of which Moab, where Khirbet ‘Ataruz is located, is included), but also in those areas that were known to have been settled by the Israelite tribes, corroborate Biblical texts where women’s acts of worship to pagan gods and goddesses are vilified.<sup>5</sup>

Asherah in particular has a complicated history and was worshipped not only alongside the Canaanite deity Ba’al, but appears to have been venerated alongside

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<sup>5</sup> Jeremiah 7 and 44 describes woman’s worship of the Queen of Heaven, while Ezekiel 8 describes woman mourning for Tammuz, an ancient god of fertility from Mesopotamia.



Israelite's YHWH as well (Dever 2005: 100-02). Manifestations of this "Mother Goddess" could be found not only in figurines, but in living trees, hilltop forest sanctuaries, or a wooden pole or image of a tree. The profusion of tree imagery on architectural models demonstrates this. According to Dever, "...the biblical writers must have been embarrassed by the notion of a "Hebrew Goddess," but they could not condemn her and her cult without tacitly, but covertly, acknowledging her existence" (Dever 2005: 102).

In addition to Dever, other scholars have written about the concept of common religious practices and how the religion of YHWH was melded with the pagan religions of Israelite's neighbors. Often misunderstood as a religion of ignorance, Susan Ackerman states,

Popular religion is in this sense about losers. But ironically, perhaps these losers probably held the majority and represented the mainstream in their day. A description of Israelite popular religion is thus an essential component in any treatment of Israelite religion as a whole. Indeed, broadly speaking the program that is called for here is a rewriting of the history of the religion of Israel so as to take popular religion fairly into account (Ackerman 1992: 2).

Subsequently, the best way to study popular religion of the masses is through archaeology and analysis which continues to provide new information through discovery of cultic objects found in local shrines, sanctuaries, and domestic settings, including standing stones, altars, figurines, cultic vessels, and architectural models.

### Women as Keepers of the Faith

While the Bible mentions the age of some men as reaching 80 years<sup>6</sup>, it is believed that the average lifespan of a woman was closer to 30 years, with men living up

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<sup>6</sup> In 2 Sam 19:35, Barsillai claims to be 80 years old.

to 10 years longer on average (Ebeling 2010: 132-33). The dangers of childbirth and high infant mortality rate along with the hazards associated with farming that the modern person may take for granted; i.e. a gash on the leg that could get infected, lead to sepsis, and result in death, are attested by ancient skeletal remains. The harsh reality of the often brutal working conditions of women are revealed in musculoskeletal stress markers (Ebeling 2010: 137), as well as the overall estimated young ages of the remains.

As health was generally poor for the majority of the population, it was in the best interest of a family to illicit frequent help from the gods. Due to the dangers of pregnancy and the high chance that a child would not survive to adulthood, it has been suggested by many scholars<sup>7</sup> that the greater part of the religious practices, the folk religion of the common people, were initiated and performed by women. This is likely because of the perils of producing a child, or in the case of Rebecca (Gen 25: 21) and Hannah (1 Sam 1: 5-7), the result of being barren. Unfortunately, in the words of ethnographer Clifford Geertz, women were, “the people without a history” (Geertz 1969), or rather, those without any written accounts that have survived. Van der Toorn states a similar concept:

The most commonplace things get lost most easily. Moreover, it is possible that certain religious activities were carried out without words following an unwritten ritual. They have left behind no traces in our texts (van der Toorn 1994: 144).

Even though the process of bearing a child was dangerous for a woman, it should be mentioned that men too despaired for children as they had need for a lineage. We read in Genesis that Abraham prayed fervently to God for an heir (Gen 15: 2-3). Therefore,

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<sup>7</sup> In addition to Dever (2005), Ackerman (1992), and Ebeling (2010), Dutch scholar Karel van der Toorn writes about the unique religious concerns of women (1994). Myers has also written extensively about the role of woman specifically in ancient Israel (see her 2012 publication, *Rediscovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context*).

although there is strong support for woman directing the household religious practices, it is also clear that men played a crucial part in folk religion as well.

It was Phyllis Bird who first suggested that even though the Bible makes it clear that Israelite women were restricted in participating in the official cult, although some no doubt accompanied their husbands on pilgrimages to Jerusalem, “there must have been familial ritual performed in domestic environments in which women played prominent roles” (Bird 1987: 409). Meyers has also written extensively on the role of women in ancient Israel society. She postulates that as women were largely responsible for food preparation, then it can be assumed that they held primary responsibility for the ritual offering of food, including the preparation of ritual meals (Meyers 2012: 163).

The concept that woman were in charge of the religious practices of the family is suggested by Myers (2002) in her publication on women’s role in religion. Myers stresses that the religious needs of women far outweighed that of men as, “rituals surrounding pregnancy, labor, and birth, along with those securing fertility before pregnancy and those dealing with post-partum lactation, infant care, and circumcision, constitute the religious culture of woman more than men” (Meyers 2002: 283). Other scholars, like Ackerman, have suggested that in turn woman were not only the primary organizers of the family cult, but because the religious practices of woman ensured the very survival of the family itself, woman were responsible for providing, transporting, and presenting their family’s offerings to the regional sanctuary (Ackerman 2008: 136, 146, 148). By this, she concludes that women were, “theologians who [gave] voice to some of household and family religion’s most constitutive beliefs” (Ackerman 2008: 149).

The theory that women were the primary organizers of folk religion is demonstrated by archaeological remains. The fact that figurines and architectural models have been found in domestic settings as well as in sanctuary complexes strongly suggests cultic activity within the home. It should also be stated that the lack of mention of these models within the Biblical text may suggest what one can infer through the words of disapproval about pagan practices in Israel; that they were forbidden, thus intended for home or local community use (Dever 2005: 122). The proliferation of Asherah figurines especially, including those appearing on architectural models along with their accompanying motifs, speak powerfully of specific issues concerning women;<sup>8</sup> fertility, childbirth, and the safety and health of her children and family. It makes sense that Israelite women living far from the influence of the main temple of Jerusalem, would prefer the local female deities, usually Asherah, associated with fertility, childbirth, and lactation that were commonly worshipped in neighboring cultures. In conclusion, it can be proposed that women may have been involved in the creation and use of architectural models, whether directly or indirectly. While no archaeological proof of this exists, the overwhelming data provided above lends itself to this possibility.

#### Architectural Models and Religion

The fact that architectural models and/or fragments of them have been found in nearly every excavation site in the Levant demonstrates their importance in the role of folk religion. The similarities in type and use of motifs verifies the intermingling of artisans scattered among the smaller kingdoms of Transjordan. The close proximity of

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<sup>8</sup> See Ebeling's fascinating little book on *Woman's Lives in Biblical Times* (2010), which tells the fictional tale of an Israelite woman from birth to death, along with archaeological data and academic sources that offer a discussion on the evidence for the events described in the narrative.

these kingdoms to one another led to a blending of religious practices and material culture, as further evidenced through textual sources from the Old Testament.

The variety in architectural models speaks to another interesting speculation why these objects were vital to the religious practices of the common people. While they all seem to share similar motifs (as will be discussed in the following section), their portrayal of these motifs is unique, therefore preventing archaeologists from placing them neatly into categories by style in the same way that other ceramics like bowls, jars, pithoi, and jugs have. Therefore, the result has been the many often confusing typologies that have been presented over the years. One reason for this is the handmade nature of each architectural model. Pottery used for utilitarian purposes was typically mass produced and size and shape were carefully monitored for consistency. Figurines were also often mass produced. This consistency has allowed archaeologists to classify them as they are often reliable indicators of time and culture. Architectural models however, seem to resist this classification. Perhaps it was due to their size that prohibited mass production, but it could be suggested that the main reason was that each model was commissioned or designed with a specific purpose in mind; that of serving a community, a family, or even the needs of an individual, i.e. a woman or family of women.

The often sloppy execution of these objects also raises the question of importance. The Bible makes it clear that the finest artisans were to build the temple commissioned by Solomon. Evidence produced on seal engravings, sculptural elements, and painted wares attest that even the common people had an appreciation of visual beauty. However, beauty was not something that could always be afforded. Ziony Zevet suggests that the ancient people of the Iron Age Levant believed that motifs had supernatural properties. In

his words, “the significance of these particular artifacts lies in their representational aspects” (Zevit 2001: 316). According to Dever, even though all forms of magic were considered taboo in the YHWH cult, the fact that these practices were condemned so fervently in the Bible attests to their proliferation. What would be the point in condemning magic if it were not used pervasively in folk religion? (Dever 2005: 126).

Common motifs (to be discussed in the following sections) had strong meaning that were understood by multiple kingdoms and cultures as demonstrated by the similarity of motifs and placement on architectural models all over the Levant. Zevit states that our current understanding of what these motifs meant to the ancient population is still unclear, but it is evident that they were considered powerful communicators with the divine (Zevit 2001: 322).

It is suggested here that even though the common people had an awareness and even appreciation for the visually beautiful, the harsh realities of life led them to focus on the motif, rather than on the execution of the motif. Clearly, there were artisans who lived in these kingdoms who had training, or just had natural artistic talent, as can be seen in some architectural models where it is evident that the creator took care to execute the model to the best of their ability with varied levels of success. However, there are other models that appear to have been hastily constructed, or made by those lacking in artistic skill or training (further attesting to their use in folk religion). Even the elaborately decorated and well-known Ta’anach Stand (Figure 2.1), full of motifs that were loaded with meaning, shows the hand of a novice artisan, when compared to the skilled works found in the greater surrounding empires of Egypt and Assyria.

In addition to architectural models being found in domestic settings, many have been found in local and familial shrines, and open-air sanctuaries. Excavations at Tel Rehov have revealed a 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. open-air sanctuary in Area A (Stratum V-IV) that has produced several cult stands (Mazar 2015: 27-30). The 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. Judean fortress of Lachish revealed various cult stands that were discovered in Cult Room 49 in Stratum V (Zevit 2001: 213-17). In addition, the open-air sanctuary excavated in Field H at Tall al-‘Umayri has produced many architectural models and fragments dating to the late Iron Age I (see Chapters 3 and 4). Khirbet ‘Ataruz has also produced at least seven identified architectural models, most of which are associated with the Main Sanctuary Room and dating to Iron Age IIA (see Chapters 5 and 6).

The above examples present evidence for local religious practices disapproved of by the Biblical writers of the Old Testament. Architectural models do not appear by name in the Bible, nor has any evidence for their presence been found associated with the temple in Jerusalem, suggesting that these objects were specific to local community and family use. As these shrines and sanctuary complexes attest, there was no real wealth involved in the creation of cultic objects. They were made of clay, which was cheap and readily available. The often hasty construction and great variety in the way common motifs were portrayed and arranged supports the theory that architectural models were made for unique religious purposes that served individual or local needs. Due to the ruthlessness of life, it did not matter if the motifs were carried out in a highly skilled manner (although it is apparent that many tried); it was the motif itself that served the mystical purpose intended. Therefore, it is proposed that this may be the reason why so

many architectural models seem to be created with little skill or care about the visual aesthetics of the object. Life did not afford most people that luxury.

What role did architectural models thus play? As discussed above, it seems clear that much of the religious practices of the common people involved the issues concerning woman and family. Placement of architectural models in both home and sanctuary reveals clues that perhaps some of these objects were made for individual use and some to serve the needs of several, or of even the entire community. How exactly they were used is still unknown. As we have no textual evidence describing their use, suggestions can only be made based on archaeological evidence. It can be stated however, that as each architectural model was unique, they seem to have been made for specific issues, instances, and/or needs. The personal nature of these objects reveal not only the religious beliefs of the common people, but the issues that concerned them most in life.

## **Construction and Artisan**

### **Manufacturing an Architectural Model**

Potters throughout history have accumulated a vast amount of knowledge concerning raw materials. Recipes on how to mix and prepare clays were passed down from generation to generation. Different clay types in specific proportions were often combined with other materials such as straw or grog (finely ground stone, basalt, or broken fired ceramic), and added to the clay body for enhanced strength and shrinkage control. All this combined to produce different types of ceramics for different types of uses (Sinopoli 1991). The overall making of ceramics has changed very little with the passing of time. Observing potters in the more traditional societies, such as in Jordan,



allows the confirmation as to the use of these traditional practices, which can in turn give a great deal of information about how ancient potters produced their wares.

A good example of old pottery production techniques can be found near Madaba, Jordan. The Zizia potters produce functional pots much in the same manner potters have for millennia. Using kick wheels and drying vats and wood or trash-fired kilns, the only convenience used is an electric pug mill, which mixes the clay secondarily and extrudes it into logs of similar length and thickness, thus allowing pots to be produced of the same size. The first step in mixing involves the potters mixing different clay bodies along with salt using their feet (Figure 2.4). Just like potters from the Iron Age, the failures and successes of various ceramics over time, experimentation, and familiarity with local clays have led the Zizia potters to intimately understand the characteristics and behaviors of their raw materials and to make best use of local available resources.

Clay was cheap and readily available. By molding the clay while wet, one could form an infinite number of shapes to best suit the needs and desires of consumers. Stone, while also common, was harder to form and required more specialized tools and skills. With clay, all one needs are hands, a few simple tools that are easily made out of shaped sticks, or small pieces of wood or stone, and a fire. Chapter 5 will discuss the proposed creation of the large 'Ataruz cult stand based on an interview with an internationally recognized potter.

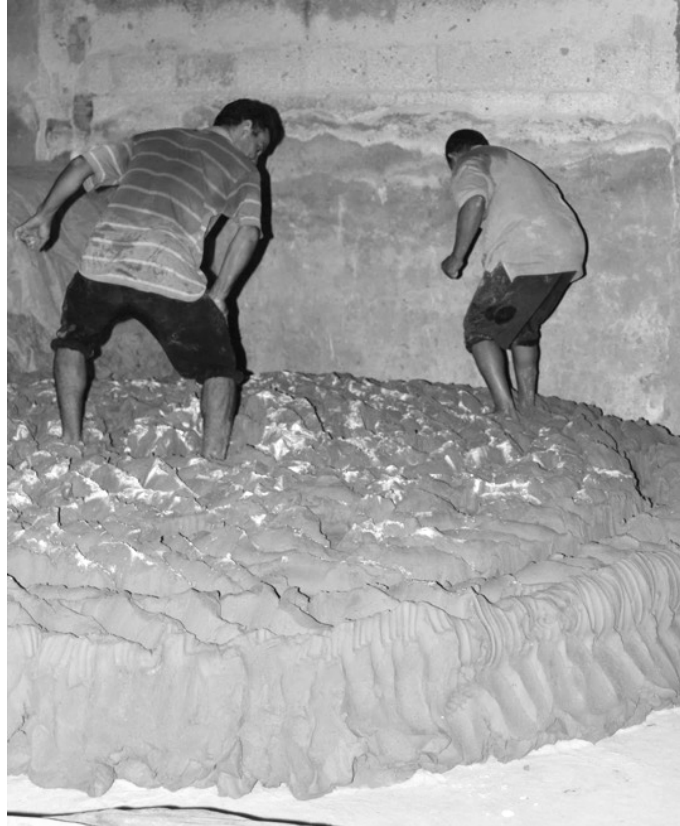


Figure 2.4. The Zizia potters mixing clay the traditional way by using their feet (photo by the author).

Archaeological evidence for the production of ceramics is evident. Potter's workshops, including kilns; the ovens in which bone-dry clay objects were fired, have been found. Dating primarily to the Iron Age, examples of ceramic workshops have been found at Lachish and Megiddo (Wood 1992: 428). No workshops in Jordan have been identified as of yet, but they had to exist.

#### Artisans and the Concept of Aesthetics

Artisans and Craftsmen are mentioned in the Bible at least 18 times. Occupations that would be considered "artistic" endeavors today (potters, goldsmiths, etc.) are mentioned in the pre-exilic period (Isa 29:16; Jer 10:9; 18:4), but it is in the Old Testament that craftsmen and artisans are mentioned in a more descriptive manner.

Exodus 28:5 first mentions workers skilled in the area of garment making and gem work in the creation of the priestly garments. The Israelites, just having come out of Egypt, are described as having skilled artisans among them including materials such as gold jewelry, finely woven cloth, and gemstones. It is also established that women at this time were skilled in the arts as well. When called upon by Moses to donate materials in order to build the tabernacle in the wilderness (Ex 35: 21-29), as well as donating services, among the population were, “all the women who were skilled artisans” (Ex 35:26). One of the only artisans to be mentioned by name, Bezalel son of Uri, is then put in charge, “to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood and to engage in all kinds of artistic crafts.” (Ex 35: 32-33).

Later, it is read that Tyre was an artistic resource for Israel when in 2 Chronicles (2:14) a young artisan recommended to King David is mentioned as having a father from Tyre. When David’s son Solomon comes to power, he called upon his friend Hiram from Tyre and asked him to send workers, which clearly included artisans, to build his temple. The interior descriptions of the temple (1 Kgs 6: 15-36), describe a luxurious and high level of artistic skill that was valued and seen as important for a holy setting. Ezra 3:7 refers to Tyre again as a place of high artistic production.

Through these verses, a picture emerges of a burgeoning Israelite people who initially were skilled in the arts, but with time seemed to lose that ability. It is clear that by the time of David and Solomon in the 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., those lost artistic traditions resulted in Israel not having anyone deemed skilled enough to create a temple fit for a king. The free exchange of artisans between cities and countries is further evidenced by

material culture remains<sup>9</sup> at archaeological sites and the many known trade routes<sup>10</sup> that helped facilitate the spreading of artistic styles, motifs, and forms. An artistic class had established itself in Israel however, by the time of Jehoiachin. 2 Kings 24 states that Nebuchadnezzar took captive Jerusalem and deported thousands of people including, “a thousand skilled workers and artisans” (2 Kgs 24: 16).

Palaces and temples utilized cult stands, likely the incense stands of the Bible, but these would have been made of precious metals, created by the finest artisans the local kings could afford or import attesting that the level of artistic skill was reflected in the wealth of the patron. This is made most clear in ancient Egypt where the prolific grave goods of royal tombs, such as those of the minor king Tutankhamen, reveal the highly trained eye and hand of the artist. What therefore is to be made of architectural models that were made out of fired clay? As clay was a cheap and easily available, it makes sense that clay versions of temple accessories, including figurines, cultic vessels, and architectural models, would have been copied by minor artisans, even those with little artistic ability. These clay versions would likely have then been produced by local artisans, some of whom may have been women, who may have had some training, or at least a basic knowledge, in the more common motifs and their meaning. As was previously mentioned, these objects would have been infused with meaning or mystical powers through their iconography, not through the skill in which these motifs were

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<sup>9</sup> An example of mixed artistic traditions can be found after the end of the Bronze Age, which coincides with the mass migration of the Sea Peoples who in turn, brought their unique artistic styles with them. These Aegean styles would eventually become hybridized as they merged with local Levantine and Cypriot traditions (See Killebrew 2008, Lehmann 2013, and Yasur-Landau 2010).

<sup>10</sup> During the Iron Age, two modes of exchange over distances were found in sea travel and camel caravans across the land. One of the most well-known is the King’s Highway which passes not far from Khirbet ‘Ataruz (See Master 2014, Dorsey 2003, and Cline 2003 for discussions on trade routes).

created. For smaller communities where living was precarious, the power of the motif superseded the skill level required to create it.

While artisans in Mesopotamia and Phoenicia organized themselves into guilds (Grabbe 2004: 205), there is no evidence of this type of organization that originated in any of the tribal groups of Palestine and Transjordan. Drawing on artistic traditions of the cultures surrounding them, the artisans who created architectural models likely also produced utilitarian pottery for storage, cooking, and other uses. Focus was on function, not form. However, as form could indicate meaning, it is clear that at least a small understanding of symbolism existed even among the remotest of villages. There are common motifs (addressed further down) that seem to be fairly universal when it comes to architectural models. It is the style that varies considerably.

### **The Definition of Style**

#### Artistic Style

In the field of archaeology it is necessary for one to understand the different styles of ceramics as they are used as indicators of time. It was Sir Flinders Petrie who first noticed the nuances of pottery while excavating in Egypt. He went on to study the development and change of artifacts from various sites and was able to put them into chronological order, giving birth to a relative chronology to the site in which they were found (Poole 2018). As more assemblages were discovered, Petrie's theory was put to task in sites all throughout the ancient Near East and became the established way to document archaeological periods through the identification of specific ceramic markers, which are often called typologies or "styles."

The definition of style is problematic but can be broadly defined as, “a distinctive manner of expression” (Merriam-Webster 1994: 1169). This manner of expression can be found in most anything from music, literature, and fashion, to décor, sculpture, and painting. From the beginning however, style has involved the notion of the individual (Gadamer 1960:467), i.e. the originality of expression, which in turn creates a double meaning pitting the principles of rule against originality (Tamur 2017: 4). Art history and archaeology used to share this double meaning until the 20<sup>th</sup> century when it became clear that archaeology needed to conceptualize style theoretically and methodologically (Tamur 2017: 4). However, this confusion about what exactly style means is persistent. Perhaps it best to follow the advice of James Ackerman who states:

Because our image of style is not discovered but created by abstracting certain features and combinations from works of art for the purpose of assisting historical and critical activity, it is meaningless to ask, as we usually do, ‘what is style?’; the relevant questions is rather ‘what definition of style provides the most useful structure for the history of art?’ (Ackermann 1962: 227-28).

Of course the ensuing debate continues as to what exactly is “the most useful structure” when it comes to art historical analysis.<sup>11</sup> In archaeology, style is often utilized as an instrument for identification and classification (Sauerländer 1983: 263). One can talk of the characteristic traits of Iron Age II pottery through the analysis of the shape of any diagnostic pieces; the lip, a handle, a base, along with the fabric of the clay and any painted decoration that may be apparent. In art history, this type of stylistic classification is also used to determine what is known as “genre”; a category of artistic composition, specifically painting styles such as Impressionism, Surrealism, and Abstract Expressionism.

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<sup>11</sup> See James Elkins 1996: 876, for listings of the more well-known definitions of style.

However, as stated earlier, the idea of individual style has always been a crucial component to the definition of style. The individual can be seen on archaeological artifacts in fingerprints and impressions, and the subtle nuances of how paint may be applied, or how differences such as the way features such as eyes or ears are rendered in what Marian Feldman calls “stylistic minutia” (Feldman 2014: 44). These individual characteristics are most apparent on architectural models as each one is unique, and show great variety in how motifs are portrayed, thus showing us the hand of the individual artist.

The definition of style being used to classify objects is where one must proceed with caution. While archaeological ceramic typologies have been well established since Petrie’s discovery, the tendency in archaeology to use styles of material culture to map out the ethnicity of a region in order to construct historical narratives (Tamur 2017: 1) is the source of continuous debate. The fact that multiple typologies of architectural models have been offered over the years only addressing the principles of rule without discussion of the individual, reveals the lack of understanding about the meaning of architectural models, which has resulted in much confusion. The distinction between the style of the individual and the style of a group must always be taken into consideration together. It must also be acknowledged that especially in communities that were removed geographically from seats of power, the freedom of the individual was likely more widely accepted and freely utilized as evidenced by the wide variety of “styles” that we see throughout the Levant in architectural models. This is especially true considering that Israel had no established canon of art as there was for thousands of years in Egypt.

While the definition of style can be applicable to pottery typologies, it is not particularly conducive to architectural model research. The distinctive nature of each one belies the definition of style that has become used in describing and dating pottery assemblages throughout the Levant where pottery styles are assumed based on modes of predictable expressive construction depending on when and where they were created. Therefore, architectural models are referred in this study by Shape/Type as to avoid confusion that their “style” might be indicative of place and time.

### Formalism and Style

It was in the mid 1940s that the concept of the formal elements of art came to fruition. Through the writings and teachings of Immanuel Kant<sup>12</sup>, Hans Hoffman<sup>13</sup>, and art critic Clement Greenberg<sup>14</sup>, Abstract Expressionism came to America where focus on the formal elements of design, which includes line, shape/form, color, texture, and space, were placed in opposition to the study of subject matter or content that was represented by iconography (Tamura 2017: 7-8).

In this study, a formal analysis is conducted on the presented architectural models and their fragments. This involves a description of the physical appearance of the object. Ironically, archaeologists conduct this type of analysis on a regular basis, to a greater or

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<sup>12</sup> Kant’s emphasis on excluding everything other than an object itself from aesthetic experience laid the groundwork for a formalist theory of art at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Gaiger 2002:130). See Kant 2004 [1790]: 113ff.) for his views on judgement of taste.

<sup>13</sup> Creator of the “Push Pull Theory,” Hofmann was a teacher who published several treatises on his theories of modern art and formal composition. He is considered one of the most highly influential and respected founders of the Abstract Expressionist movement (Feinberg, J. D. 2011: 57-62).

<sup>14</sup> Greenberg was an art critic who endorsed the concept of “purity” and “flatness.” For him, a painting should omit narrative, representation, and a third dimension (hence, the “flatness”) in order to attain “purity,” which could only be found in abstract art (Greenberg 1989: 133ff., 139-45).



lesser extent depending on the object and its proposed importance. However, to take form as a sole definition for style is misleading; one cannot have form without function. In the words of David Summers, “form is simply the vehicle of content” (Summers 1989: 377). In archaeology, “the moment we begin to talk about objects (in terms of any description of a work of art) is the moment we abandon wondering at them and render them static, temporally and spatially” (Tamur 2017: 12). By giving a physical description of each object first, one of the aims of this study is to then acknowledge the “individual style” alongside the typology of each object as a true art historical analysis involves all aspects that typically have been implied separately by the traditional categories of form, content, subject matter, iconography, motif, etc. The two large architectural models that are the focus of Chapters 4 and 6 delve more into issues of individual style as these objects have more material to work with, whereas the fragments from ‘Umayri (Chapter 3), due to the smallness of each object, will rely more on physical description.

### Problems Creating an Artistic Canon

Due to the easy malleable nature of clay, it quickly became a surface upon which to create images and symbols, model figurines and architectural elements, and thus create narratives reflective of a people’s culture and belief systems. Matthias Ostermann describes it best:

The word ‘narrative’ can be defined as a story or recitation of facts, especially told in the first person. In the context of ceramic narrative, we are dealing with a pictorial format, one involving an image associated intimately with an identifiable object. Expanding on the above definition is the concept of not just a story, but any image that portrays a specific message or visual sequence and association of ideas, one that touches upon some kind of human activity or drama beyond the merely ornamental and decorative, and that has the intention of perhaps provoking some kind of thought response in the viewer (Ostermann 2006: 7).

Narratives in general have the tendency to reflect the point of view of the creator. Sometimes an oral tale or belief could be altered and thus lose original meaning when translated into a visual image. Meaning and imagery could also be altered to suit the needs of a particular community. If ceramic repertoires differ from site to site, even sometimes frustratingly within the same period, then one can also expect that the art and thus, imagery would vary from site to site as well. As previously mentioned, this has made it difficult for archaeologists, and by association art historians, to establish a universal canon of art even within a single region of the ancient Near East.

During the Iron Ages, the Transjordanian region was vastly affected by international contacts and the art reflects this circumstance (Isserlin 1998: 261). Former domination by Egypt resulted in the direct copying of Egyptian architectural and iconographical forms. Ivory or faience carvings as well as clay objects echo these influences and were incorporated into local traditions. According to Claudia Suter, Levantine ivory carvings of the early Iron Age cannot be categorized by a particular artistic style. This may indicate an intentional obscuring of cultural margins across all of the Levant (Suter 2008). This flexibility of what is called “artistic style” can be found in other examples such as engraved metal bowls often associated with ivory-carving production (Feldman 2014: 31). These bowls had initially been called Phoenician in studies that attempted to categorize these bowls, found widely throughout the Levant, in order to locate specific sites of production. These studies have largely failed due to what Glenn Markoe states is a need for more scholars to acknowledge the need for better archaeological evidence, because without it there is little basis for connecting a style with a particular place of production (Markoe 2007: 170). He furthermore states that the

stylistic array of the metal bowls may be linked to traveling artists indicating what was previously mentioned about the active trade happening during the Iron Age (Markoe 2007: 170).

Can we link artistic style to specific locations? Suter thinks not. Her proposal that Leventine ivories refuse to divide efficiently into style-groups suggests that due to cultural mixing during the early Iron Age, artisans may have practiced many different styles regardless of where they lived and without concern of their ethnic backgrounds. Thus, stylistic differences were the norm and refused to be categorized (Suter 2010: 996-97).

With the above given examples, would it not be reasonable to propose that architectural models followed the same pattern? Considering the differing styles we find within close proximity during the Iron Ages, art historians such as Marian Feldman have concluded that overlapping cultures of the Iron Age Levant resulted in many artisans coming together, sharing ideas, adapting forms, and utilizing motifs for different meanings (Feldman 2014: 31-36). Ann Gunter has suggested that the presence of gold and silver listed among the tribute of Iron Age cities that were not geographically close to sources of these metals, provides evidence of an extensive trade network within the Levant (Gunter 2009: 106-07). A further example of stylistic variety can be found in fragments of two stamped ceramic jars from Busayra in southern Transjordan. The sherds, from two well-made bowls that typically fall into the category of Edomite, were impressed with straight lines around the outer surface below the rim. They illustrate two scenes, one with a grazing stag and the other with a calf nursing from its mother.

Stylistically, these scenes are characteristic of ivories from Arslan Tash and Nimrud and are classified within the South Syrian ivory style (Sedman 2002: 353-56).

Syrian, Phoenician, Aegean, and Hittite elements can thus be seen in art objects produced in the Transjordan during the Iron Ages and as a result, a wide variety of adapted motifs were applied prolifically, often with no desire or intention to replicate original meaning or prototype (Isserlin 1998: 261-62). These forms were then adopted by Israelite, Moabite, Ammonite, and Edomite alike and seen outside of context, one can hardly identify the difference. The results of this constant fluidity of artistic trends has resulted in the difficulty in determining artistic style based on location and in establishing an artistic canon for Transjordan.

In the case of architectural models however, one must first look to the Phoenicians, who were heavily influenced in turn by the Egyptians. With the collapse of the Bronze Age, Egypt lost its grip of control and the coastal regions of the Levant began to flourish. Phoenicia represented a confederation of maritime traders rather than a defined countries. Their major cities were Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, and Arwad (Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art 2004). Due to flourishing trade routes, substantiated with textual references in the Bible (2 Chron. 2:14, 1 Kgs 6: 15-36), the Phoenicians not only imported Egyptian goods and then exported them to the Levant, but they adopted Egyptian styles and forms in their own artwork (Markoe 1990: 16). These Egyptianizing styles can be witnessed at sites such as Ras Shamra and Byblos (Markoe 1990: 17) and would eventually be found as far south in sites such as Balu'a, where a stele was discovered in 1930, bearing strong Egyptianized figures.<sup>15</sup> There is also evidence that the

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<sup>15</sup> Although much as been written about the enigmatic Balu'a Stele, the most recent study to revisit these propositions is by Bruce and Carolyn Routledge (2

Phoenicians were influenced by the cultures of the Aegean, Cyprus, Assyria, and Syria (MOMA 2004). These influences were in turn felt throughout the Levant,<sup>16</sup> and subsequently at the sites of Tall al-'Umayri and Khirbet 'Ataruz.

It is clear that the Levant was also exposed throughout its history to the artistic influence of the major surrounding civilizations of the ancient Near East in addition to the minor ones. Evidence of Egyptian artistic influence from the end of the Middle Bronze Age onward can be found primarily in scarab seals (Beck 2002: 203). Imagery such as sphinxes, griffins, winged sun-discs, Bes figures, royal crowns, and signs for life and well-being, were integrated into local artistic motifs and took on a life all their own which was not necessarily related to the original meaning. Awareness of Mesopotamian artistic themes such as those found on the famous 'Standard of Ur,' have been identified in particular on ivory carvings (Porada 1968: 15-26) where theme and composition are followed. The Megiddo Ivories however, are our best example of the artistic influences coming from Egypt and Mesopotamia.<sup>17</sup>

The Bronze Age was a time of high commercial activity and intense political endeavors. The evidence from this time is best seen in the iconography and artistic motifs found on seals and ivory carvings that proliferated throughout Palestine and Transjordan (Porada 1968: 203). The residual effect after the collapse of the Bronze Age was felt well into the Iron Age as is attested through archaeology.

With the invasion of the Sea Peoples at the end of the Bronze Age (12<sup>th</sup> century

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<sup>16</sup> For a thorough discussion on the emergence of Phoenician art and its influence on the Levant, see Markoe (1990).

<sup>17</sup> See Loud's *The Megiddo Ivories* (Maxwell-Hyslop 1942), and a thorough discussion on style and archaeological perspective by Feldman (2009).

B.C.E.), commercial trade shifted, bringing about Mesopotamian and Egyptian influences from a secondary context via ancient Phoenicia. Artistic elements making their way into Transjordan clearly had a strong Phoenician influence as evidenced through archaeology as well as through Biblical texts. The Book of Kings describes the contract formed between King Solomon of Judah and King Hiram of Tyre.<sup>18</sup> In the following century, King Ahab of Israel married Jezebel, the daughter of the King of Sidon.<sup>19</sup> This ill-fated union helped to introduce Phoenician cult into 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. Israel. Other elements of Phoenician religion were introduced through another royal marriage; this time through a Phoenician princess named Athalia who was sent to marry Jehoram, King of Judah.<sup>20</sup> The Biblical texts make it clear that Phoenicia was the primary source of not only raw materials and workmen, but of cultural, religious, and as a result – artistic influences (Beck 2002: 205).

Phoenicia was not the only source of influence however. With the arrival of the Philistines, and the discovery of a massive *favissa* at Yavneh (Figure 2.5), located on the coast of Israel, evidence of artistic traditions can be traced through elements of iconography brought over by the Sea Peoples. It is not often that archaeologists are fortunate to uncover a *favissa*, or repository, of finds that enable scholars to create a typology or artistic canon for a site. In the case of Yavneh, the extraordinary find in 2002 of over 1,000 temple objects that included nearly 200 model shrines, allowed scholars for

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<sup>18</sup> 1 Kgs 5

<sup>19</sup> 1 Kgs 16:30- 33; 18:19.

<sup>20</sup> II Kgs 8:18, 26-27; II Chr 24:7.



Figure 2.5. The *favissa* of Yavneh (Kletter, Ziffer, Zwickel 2010: pl. 3).

the first time to identify a specific artistic style applicable to Iron Age Philistine cult objects and Philistine model shrines in particular (Kletter, Ziffer and Zwickel 2010).

Unfortunately, Yavneh is an exception. In the newly forming kingdoms of the Levant in the emerging Iron Age, the lack of governmental structure and self-made kings (Routledge 2017: 60) prevented an established artisan class from forming in Israel and Transjordan in particular. The ethnic and tribal diversity that was influenced by surrounding kingdoms led to an art that could at best be described in the way common religion was practiced as discussed earlier; folk religion gave way to folk art. In a way, this diversity allowed for much individual expression of style as artisans utilized established motifs and manipulated them to suit individual or community needs. The motifs, which are often the only elements that give meaning, are discussed next.

## Motifs

### Introduction

Even though it has been established that style is difficult to identify, artistic motifs are more predictable. An artistic motif can be described as a repeated pattern, design, element, or theme that may vary in its stylistic appearance, but serves the same or similar cultural purpose throughout a given area. Feldman talks about collective memory in the early Iron Age Levant as a material component evident in “stylistic minutiae” (Feldman 2014: 44). These minute traits, or small details such as how eyes and ears are fashioned, can offer clues to shared social practices at the levels of both formation and comprehension of an object (Feldman 2014: 44-45). It is proposed here that Feldman’s subtle stylistic indicators can be seen in the artistic motifs present on many architectural models.

### Collective Memory

Collective memory refers to how groups of people remember their past and can refer to a shared body of knowledge, values and ideas, and imagery.<sup>21</sup> For example; Jews have a collective memory about WWII in terms of the extermination at Nazi concentration camps of their family members and/or ancestors, while most North Americans remember WWII through the stories of their parents and grandparents about landing on the coast of Normandy or watching the horrors of Pearl Harbor. Each person has some sort of collective memory for any important social group to which that person belongs. Each of those individual memories, based on either interpretations or actual

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<sup>21</sup> See the works of Roediger and Abel (2015), Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi and Levy (2011), and Hirst and Manier (2008) for thorough examinations and studies pertaining to collective memory.



first-hand accounts, is slightly different with memories changing over generations. The most recent example of a prominent collective memory can be found in the heart of every North American. Just 17 years ago, the 9/11 attacks changed the course of North America's thinking concerning Muslims, their connection to terrorism, and subsequently has resulted in suspicion about many foreign people seeking to immigrate to the United States.

In the same manner, collective memory also involves collective forgetting. An example given by cognitive scientists Roediger III and DeSoto focuses on studies done with cognitive recollection of presidents of the United States. It seems that Americans rapidly forget presidents before JFK and often could not remember the last five presidents in order (Roediger III and DeSoto 2016).

Based on these examples, is collective memory reliable? In order to answer this, one must first clarify the difference between collective memory and cultural memory, the latter being what Dever calls archaeology's newest fad (Dever 2017: 49). According to Dever, cultural memory is the term currently being used to describe the postmodern view on history that is being promoted by biblical revisionists as a way of minimizing the historicity of the biblical texts (Dever 2017: 48-56).<sup>22</sup> This should not be confused with collective memory, nor even with history in general. History's purpose is to generally provide a thorough, accurate, and unbiased description of past events. In this sense, archaeology, which also seems to be dismissed by cultural memory proponents, offers the material data which history relies upon in addition to text. Collective memory represents how past events can be shaped by how people *remember* them.

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<sup>22</sup> One of the biggest challenges to biblical archaeology and history today are the postmodern views perpetrated by scholars such as N. P. Lemche (2008) and T. L. Thompson (1999).

So how do we make conclusions about a group's collective memory, and comprehend something essential about that group's national identity and outlook? One word; archaeology. The material remains of that group must be studied, especially when that group existed in the ancient world.

Related to collective memory is individual style as it pertains to art. It was previously discussed that style has two components; that of predictable rule, as brought about by the necessary repetition required to mass produce utilitarian wares like cooking pots and pithoi, and that of the individual, as seen in the wide variety of form, design, and execution of common motifs. According to Feldman, predictable style in the art of the ancient Near East can be found in the art of the greater empires where, "art is intentionally created and deployed for various strategic ends, such as for propaganda legitimizing a king" (Feldman 2014: 47). This standardized art is best witnessed in Egypt where for thousands of years artistic style remained virtually unchanged, attesting the strong political and religious conventions that dictated a specific style of art for the specific purpose of immortalizing the king and promoting religious and political ideology. In the small kingdoms of Transjordan, where there was no strong dominant royal house, art produced for religious purposes was not necessarily dictated by a set standard.

Powerful motifs, which had roots in older civilizations, compelled artisans to use them. The subtle stylistic traits that resulted in execution, "formed a critical component of collective memory, being the product and source of shared social practices at the level of both creation and appreciation" (Feldman 2014: 44). In addition to proposing that style be considered as the physical embodiment of social practice, Feldman also emphasizes that

the individual expression of motif could indicate that original meaning of the motif may have been lost and the continuous repetition of it over the years served as something Pierre Bourdieu called the *habitus*; embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history (Feldman 2014: 64; Bourdieu 1990: 56). Feldman concludes that style, as defined by Bourdieu, is thus a “prime component that keeps the past alive as embodied history and collective memory” (Feldman 2014: 64).

How does this apply to architectural models? In looking at the distinctiveness of each one and the proliferation of ornamentation and iconographical imagery present on many of them, it is proposed that in addition to the powerful magic that was believed to infuse motif, the imagery itself could have the purpose of conveying collective memory to anyone who might view it. Considering most of the population was illiterate, this makes sense. Motif had the power to teach; it not only generated, but maintained and transformed memory and belief. With this understanding, it can be recognized that the motifs that will be discussed next were powerful enough to be applicable to many kingdoms, cultures, and even civilizations, therefore they were important and must be maintained. The individualist way in which they were conceived could have been due to urgency, individual interpretation, or simply the logical outcome of artistic evolution as there were likely different conditions of production and consumption, or social practice, at every city (Feldman 2014: 65). Regardless, motifs were powerful.

### Common Motifs

The most common artistic motifs seen on architectural models of Transjordan will be presented next. A more complete analysis will be given in each chapter where the studied architectural models, primarily The Large Tall Al-‘Umayri Model Shrine

(Chapter 3) and especially The Large Khirbet ‘Ataruz Cult Stand (Chapter 5), display these iconographical motifs to the degree that they can be studied in depth. There are many motifs that appear frequently on art objects throughout the Iron Ages, but the most common iconographical motifs found in architectural models of Transjordan are as follows:

1) Flanking Figures. Usually female, two matching figures are commonly found on either side of the main opening on model shrines in particular, such as the one from Tall al-‘Umayri. However, they have been found on cult stands as well, like the one that will be discussed in Chapter 5 from Khirbet ‘Ataruz. Flanking figures can also be found in animal form with the most common being that of lions (Figure 2.6).



Figure 2.6. Iron Age model shrine from a private collection. This particular model shows flanking lion figures as well as winged sphinx-like creatures atop the columns. (<https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/ancient-cultures/daily-life-and-practice/the-enduring-symbolism-of-doves/>).

2) Trees/Palmettes/Columns. Evidence of tree worship which traces back to Mesopotamia, can be seen in supporting pillars or columns seen on many architectural models. By the Iron Age these trees could be found in an evolved form in palmette capitals on top of columns. These palmettes would further evolve into the proto-aeolic capitals found primarily in Israel beginning in the 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. (Shiloh 1977: 33-35). Trees can also be found in local Canaanite art with the tree-and-goat motif (Beck 2002: 208), which can be traced back to modern day Iraq where in the Royal Cemetery of Ur (2600-2400 B.C.E.), a gold and lapis lazuli object of a ram in a thicket was discovered (Figure 2.7). Tree variations are also seen in palm branch motifs.

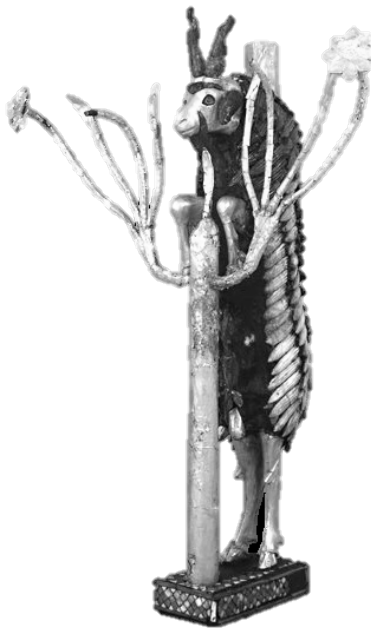


Figure 2.7. Ram in Thicket.  
([https://britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=368265&partId=1](https://britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=368265&partId=1)).

3) Lions. Lions accompanied by female figurines have appeared on architectural models and on model shrines in particular. Lions can be seen crouching beside the main entrance to a model or in some cases, beneath or beside the feet of a female figurine,

hinting at that figure's divine nature. They have also been found on top of models. This tradition of figures standing atop animals can be traced back to Mesopotamia where a relief from Maltaya shows a procession of gods standing on top of their corresponding attribute animals (Figure 2.8). The motif can also be seen in Egypt during the New Kingdom (1550-1150 B.C.E.) where a stele shows Qadesh, Qedeschet, a guardian goddess worshiped in the Canaanite region, standing on top of a lion (Figure 2.9).

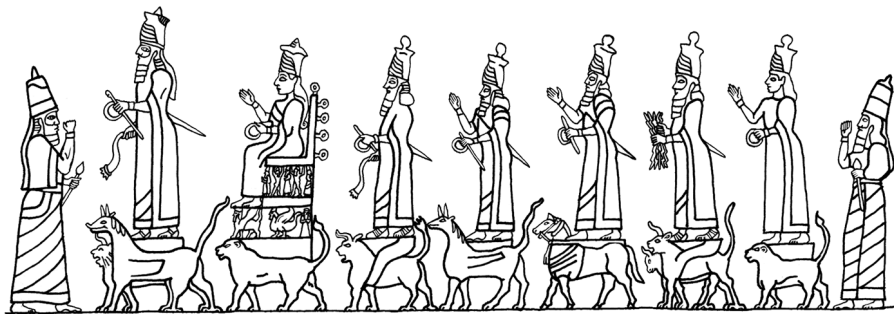


Figure 2.8. Assyrian gods standing on top of their attribute animals at Maltaya. (<http://www.mesopotamiangods.com/erra-nergal-and-ishum-ninurta/>).



Figure 2.9. Qedeschet standing on the back of her attribute animal, the lion. From New Kingdom Thebes. (<https://www.academic-bible.com/en/wibilex/the-bible-encyclopedia/lexikon/sachwort/anzeigen/details/goettergruppe/ch/7c444df962c16d21d6082135fe8be8f0/>).

4) Geometric Design. Usually painted or incised, geometric designs commonly found on pottery, wall paintings, and architectural elements are found on architectural models as well. Most of the time these designs seem to be aesthetic fillers, with parallels found in Egypt and Mesopotamia, such as the motifs of the lotus and the star or rosette. The rosette especially has an interesting history that can be traced back to Mesopotamia. According to Tally Onan, the star and rosette are similar enough to warrant a similar interpretation that refers to a female deity; Ishtar/Inanna in particular (Ornan 2005: 151-52). The more common geometric designs however, included checkered patterns, triangle and diamond patterns, dots, zigzags (Figure 2.10), wavy lines, and circles. Wavy lines

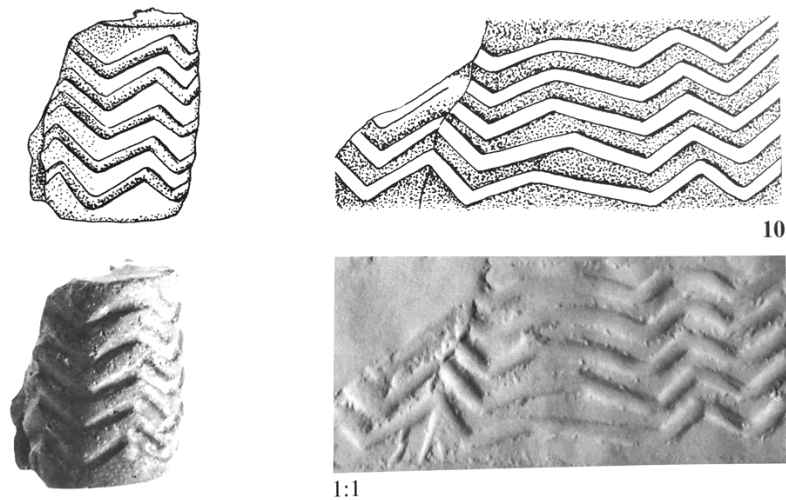


Figure 2.10. Cylinder seal from Bab edh-Drah' showing zig-zag lines. (Eggler & Keel: 2006: 88-89).

and zig-zags can be traced back to Mesopotamian stamp seals with the motif migrating to the Argloid and Aegean by EB IV and appearing in northern Palestine and Transjordan as early as EB I (Eggler & Keel 2006: 88).

5) Other. The above motifs are the most common, but there were others that also appear including depictions of gazelles/ibex's, bulls, griffins, birds, and stylized renditions of flowers, particularly that of the lotus and papyrus.<sup>23</sup>

Pirhiya Beck (2002: 211) discusses the importance of cult stands in particular as important transmitters of iconography. She also states that whoever painted the ubiquitous Egyptian lotus flower motif,<sup>24</sup> introduced a decorative motif of lotus flowers and buds that were typically shown in a string or chain. This chained lotus flower motif became hugely popular, and from the 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. on, they appear on art of all kinds. Whoever then introduced the motif may have subsequently transmitted it to Palestinian iconography and therefore its development in Palestinian art may have been independent from a 'Phoenician' channel (Beck 2002: 211). This example perfectly encapsulates the concept of collective memory as evidenced in motifs traveling across cultures.

It is clear that the artistic evidence coming from the Levant reveals that artisans working in these regions made use of the same stock of motifs common to the major civilizations that came before them. Artisans took these motifs and adjusted them according to local traditions and needs. By employing artistic elements from Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Phoenicia (Syria), an artistic "style" came about in halting and often confusing ways. Artisans utilizing a variety of styles and motifs led to the rather muddled, albeit rich, assortment of forms and motifs. But was it intentional? Feldman

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<sup>23</sup> In a recent article, Andrew McDonald discusses the widespread use of lotus imagery all across the ancient world as evidence for strong cultural diffusion between Egypt and Mesopotamia (McDonald 2018). See also Beatrice Teissier's work on Egyptian iconography as appearing on MB Syro-Palestinian cylinder seals (Teissier: 1995: 108-10).

<sup>24</sup> The earliest evidence found in the Levant was recorded on MB Tell el-Yehudiyeh juglets (Montet 1929: 245, no. 918)



offers tantalizing thoughts from an art historian's perspective. An art historian approaches art objects from the viewpoint that each artwork has intentionality; it was created for a purpose and the individual. In this case the artisan finds expression of meaning in the routine and often automatic process of making art (Feldman 2014: 47). The individual artisan can thus be seen in the unique stylistic appearance of common motifs intended to convey a universal religious and/or political ideology. But the degree to which these common motifs, that were widely understood at the time, were executed due to the integration of artistic styles combined with individual expression, can prove difficult to decipher.

Creating a typology of architectural models is therefore challenging as evidenced in the many offerings presented in Chapter 1. Even within the same site, a wide variety of styles can be seen all dating to the Iron Ages. This is the case for Tall al-'Umayri and Khirbet 'Ataruz where the architectural models all display different and unique forms in addition to differing artistic motifs. While some similarities can be distinguished overall, each object is different, having varied iconographical elements and combinations that have caused archaeologists to scratch their heads when one is unearthed.

### **Conclusion**

Our knowledge of the art of the Transjordanian region during the Iron Ages is limited, which makes a proper assessment of architectural models from this region difficult. Found in and around open-air sanctuaries, familial shrines, and domestic settings, architectural models were religious objects that were intended for ritual far outside the approved realms of Jerusalem.

Regarding treatment of motifs, the amalgamation of borrowed styles shows little regard for precise detail or even neatness, while it is evident that some models were executed by artisans with advanced training. The obvious flaws in design – the outlining of limbs and forms – reveal that there was no standardized canon of artistic design instituted by a royal household and held to by appointed overseers. It seems that the creation of architectural models in places such as Tall al-‘Umayri and Khirbet ‘Ataruz, was undertaken by local artisans, perhaps women, who may or may not have had any formal training but were familiar enough with the standard motifs that held certain powers or conveyed specific beliefs. The care in which these motifs were executed was secondary. Therefore, a motif seemed to have power if it even slightly resembled a known and accepted iconographical depiction. This was all that was needed in order to be recognized by a divine entity.

Collective memory is evidenced in the common motifs found on architectural models while artistic intentionality can be understood as a result of the ways of executing an art object being secondary to the social message it was meant to convey. While the cultural affiliation of those artists who made these architectural models is of great interest, there is no way to conclusively solve this enigma based on present evidence (Beck 2002: 218). Art objects, with their construction and visual appearance, helped shaped social relations which in turn demonstrate the relationship that artisan had with the viewer or worshipper (Feldman 2014: 51). This “collective imagination” (Cutler 1994: 37) formed webs of social networks where motifs were shared, meaning was passed down, and artistic style was manipulated. The stylistic diversity, which prevents us from forming a solid Transjordanian artistic canon, should not be looked upon as

disorganized, but rather as a result of the rich multitude of styles being consumed by the various ethnic groups traveling in and around the Near East during the Iron Ages. These styles were purposefully integrated into common motifs that showed the artists hand as well as conveyed ideology. Feldman states, “ we should be thinking not in terms of a singular Levantine community identity but rather of numerous, always shifting communities that emerge and recede as different networks of skilled practices form, change, or break down” (Feldman 2014: 63).

The following chapters will discuss the architectural models and fragments, including their artistic elements, found from the controlled excavations at Tall al-‘Umayri and Khirbet ‘Ataruz. Detailed descriptions of the visual appearance of each object, including motifs (ornamentation) will be addressed followed by a proposed hypothesis based on archaeological context and analysis of any iconography. Chapter 3 begins with the broken objects from Tall al-‘Umayri.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE ARCHITECTURAL MODELS OF TALL AL-‘UMAYRI

#### **Introduction**

The following chapter includes descriptions of 20 selected objects and fragments from the 65 architectural model fragments identified at Tall al-‘Umayri. Taken from the tables located at the end of this chapter, the architectural model fragments included in the following descriptions are considered probable or certain in their designation, although a few “possible” candidates are included due to their unique characteristics. A thorough description of the fragment(s), artistic motifs, and interpretation or conclusions is included. The Madaba Plains Architectural Model Typology, or MPP AMT, will be proposed for each fragment based on the available information and given in the example provided in Chapter 1 (Table 1).

While most of the fragments in this study are currently located at La Sierra University in Riverside, California, many are still in Jordan, with a few whose whereabouts are unknown. These missing fragments are thus analyzed on the basis of notes, locus sheets, and available photographs or drawings. The chapter will conclude with a brief summary of all the ‘Umayri fragments and what it contributes to the interpretation of the religious structure of Tall al-‘Umayri during the Iron Age when these architectural models seemed to be the most prevalent.

## Fragment Descriptions

Registration: A060113

This anamorphic object was first given the classification of a figurine fragment (Figure 3.1) and has been given an MP AMT of UN/AF (Table 2). It is ambiguous at best



Figure 3.1. Object A060113 (photo by the author).

Table 2

MP AMT for Object A060113; UN/AF.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
MS – Model Shrine	PM – Pot Model	F – Fenestration(s)
	SM – Slab Model	P – Paint
	NM– Niche Model	A – Applique
CS – Cult Stand	CS – Cylindrical Stand	I – Incising
	SS – Slab Stand	<b>AF – Attached Figures</b>
<b>UN – Undetermined</b>		N - None

with no immediate parallels that can be identified. The object consists of a coarse clay body with fine black grits and larger bits of temper. It appears to have been wet smoothed with the fingers, but has no burnish or slip. The figure was formed by a thick coil that was impressed along one side to create a narrower profile on the right-hand side for unknown reasons. The “head” was then flattened slightly into an oblong shape that was

punctuated by two deep and prominent “eyes” that dominate the entire “face.” We have no way of knowing how the object was used or how its complete form may have looked. It is included in the study as a possibility for a protruding decoration on a model shrine or cult stand. There is no other evidence to support this identification other than the fact that anamorphic protrusions have been found on other model shrines and cult stands during the Iron Age.<sup>1</sup> Although the object was found in surface levels (A7J49:2) and the locus given an Islamic date, the color, texture, and low firing of the clay body aligns itself to an Iron Age dating. As these upper layers were secondary and full of pottery dating to different time periods, we can include the possibility that this object originally came from an Iron Age context.

The unusualness of Object A060113 supports the morphing of styles and creative liberties that seem evident with architectural models found in Transjordan throughout the Iron Age. While the appearance resembles a face of some sort, it could also be a decorative protrusion that was one of many similar protuberances that may have adorned a model shrine or cult stand. As of yet, no other object of similar appearance has been excavated at ‘Umayri or nearby sites preventing parallels to be drawn as to its potential meaning or use.

However, there may be a clue coming from the Middle Uruk period (3700-3500 B.C.E.) at Tell Brak, located in modern Syria. Thousands of eye “idols” (Figure 3.2) were excavated from a building now called the Eye Temple.

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<sup>1</sup> See the model shrines from Yavneh for multiple examples of decorative figures and motifs added to model shrines and cult stands (Kletter, Ziffer, Zwickel 2010).



Figure 3.2. Eye “idol” from Tell Brak in Syria (<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/327377>).

Likely left as offerings, these small figurines are all unique and made of stone. Some are crafted with multiple sets of eyes while others sport jewelry and fancy eyebrows. Wide eyes were considered an important element that demonstrated rapt attention to the gods (Rakic 2010: 43). Even though these eye “idols” predate the Iron Age by nearly 2,000 years, the concept of eyes as being sacred can still be seen in the Middle East today in the form of eye amulets fashioned into jewelry, indicating a long history of the belief that eyes are the windows into the soul and can connect one to the sacred.

Perhaps Object A060113 was a local variation on this concept of large eyes, the result of a long collective memory whose original meaning may have changed with time. This alludes to the concept that Feldman talks about when she states that, “style keeps the past alive as embodied history and collective memory” (Feldman 2014: 64). However, it could be that this object conveys an idea or motif that has yet to be discovered.

Registration: A040146

This object (Figure 3.3) consists of a medium clay body with lots of temper and fine grits and has been given an MP AMT of MS(SM)/P, A (Table 3). The thick, flat



Figure 3.3. Object A040146 (photo by the author).

Table 3

MP AMT for Object A040146; MS(SM)/P, A.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
<b>MS – Model Shrine</b>	PM – Pot Model	F – Fenestration(s)
	<b>SM – Slab Model</b>	<b>P – Paint</b>
	NM– Niche Model	<b>A – Applique</b>
CS – Cult Stand	CS – Cylindrical Stand	I – Incising
	SS – Slab Stand	AF – Attached Figures
UN – Undetermined		N - None

sherd seems to be part of an edge to an opening of either a window or door on a ceramic structure. It exhibits an exterior white slip that was painted with a reddish-brown design of a double ovoid shape with an interior zig-zag design between the lines. Within the oval are two raised protrusions that could possibly be stylized legs or horns. Without an orientation, it is impossible to determine if the protrusions were intended to be vertical or horizontal. If the protrusions were oriented vertically, which seems most likely, the object could be part of a sacred decoration above a doorway or opening.

The double-ovoid shape could represent an aureola or nimbus (Cheng and Feldman 2007), a dazzling radiance surrounding divine beings that was often depicted as



a drawn or incised circular or oval shape incasing a sacred figure like a frame. Thus, a deduction could be proposed that the protrusions could be the legs or horns of a divine figure. Deities featured in a nimbus can be found on Mesopotamian cylinder seals dating from 900-700 B.C.E. Interestingly, these deities were often pictured standing before cult stands.<sup>2</sup>

The flatness of the sherd indicates a potential shape of a square or rectangular object formed by slabs, which would fall neatly into the well-attested shape of most model shrines found during the Iron Age. The locus (A7K40:10) in which Object A040146 was found, indicates an Iron Age II date for this object. As it was discovered in the NE corner of the square, amidst rubble, flints, bones, and shells, it can be reasoned that it was found in a secondary context.

The thickness of the sherd, its flatness and obvious edge, combined with the decorative paint and applied protrusions provide sufficient evidence for consideration that this piece was probably part of a model shrine or cult stand. The painted and applied ornamentation suggests a prolifically decorated model that was likely created by a trained or knowledgeable artisan to whom aesthetics was important.

Registration: 84.456

Four pieces belonging to a cult stand (Figure 3.4) were discovered in the 1984 season in Field A. This stand has been given an MP AMT of CS(SS)/I (Table 4). At the time it was the first occasion an architectural model had accurately been identified in

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<sup>2</sup> See Teissier (1985, 164-65), for four examples of nimbus encased deities.

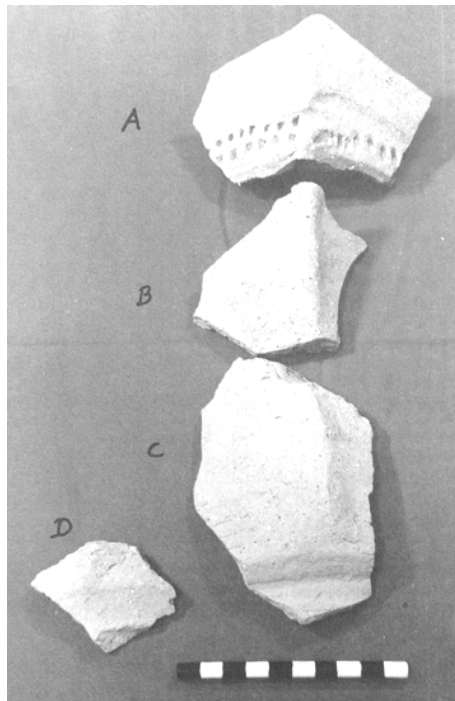


Figure 3.4. Object 84.456 (photo by Mark Ziese).

Table 4

MP AMT for Object 84.456; CS(SS)/I.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
MS – Model Shrine	PM – Pot Model	F – Fenestration(s)
	SM – Slab Model	P – Paint
	NM – Niche Model	A – Applique
<b>CS – Cult Stand</b>	CS – Cylindrical Stand	<b>I – Incising</b>
	<b>SS – Slab Stand</b>	AF – Attached Figures
UN – Undetermined		N – None

Jordan, and may have been the first one published. It was discovered in Room 2 of a building that was later identified as a typical Iron Age four-room house (Dabrowski 1991: 196). The fragments were part of Locus 10 in Square 7K50, and were designated as a surface layer. It was determined that this surface layer was created from fill taken from Locus 13 which originated in the administrative/domestic complex of Field A, which accounted for the numerous other complete or mendable vessels were found dating from

the early Bronze Age through the early Persian Period, thus the locus was given an early Persian Period date.<sup>3</sup>

The architectural model however, came from the Iron Age four-room house and possibly could have fallen from the upper floor of the building during its destruction (Dabrowski 1991: 196). The formation of the object is consistent with Iron Age architectural models, particularly of those found in the early Iron II Age as even though only black and white photos were available for evaluation, parallels to the shape of the model can be found in similar ceramic cult stands as seen the 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. Cult Stand 2 from Pella (Keel and Uelinger 1998: fig.186) (Figure 3.5), and an Iron IIA Age stand from Stratum V at Tel Rehov (Mazar 2003: fig.14 (Figure 3.6).

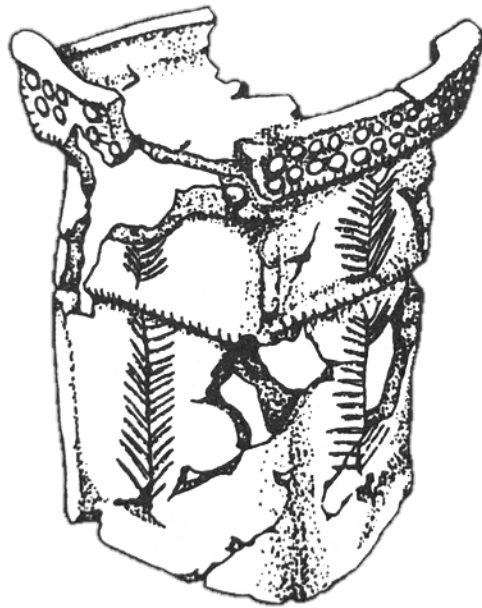


Figure 3.5. Ceramic Cult Stand 2 from Pella (Choi 2016: fig. II-85:21).

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<sup>3</sup> This information was taken from the Locus 10 locus sheet of Square 7K50 from the Madaba Plains Project excavations at Tall al-'Umayri in 1984.



Figure 3.6. A ceramic cult stand from Tel Rehov (Choi 2016: fig. II-85:23).

The pieces of Object 84.456 do not join together, but they clearly belong to the same object. A reconstruction drawing was attempted to show how the stand might have looked (Figure 3.7).

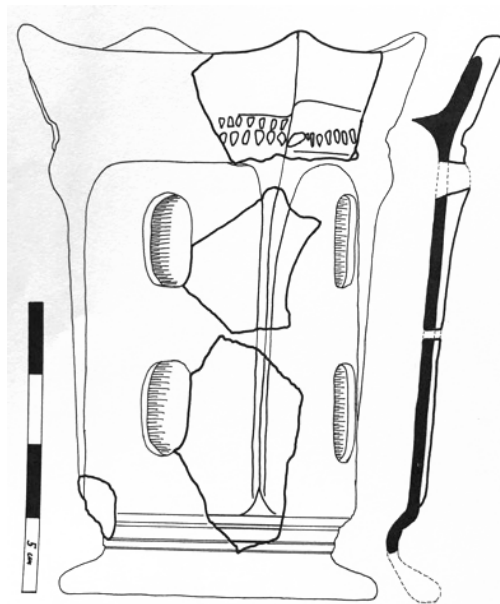


Figure 3.7. Reconstruction proposal drawing of Object 84.456 (drawing by Boguslav Dabrowski).

Without the base it is impossible to determine the actual height as the stand could have had multiple “stories”, but the design does seem to be consistent with earlier Iron Age stands. The incised decoration may hint at a later date however. It was suggested in the early 1990s by Randall Younker that the kind of impressions found on Object 84.456 are more consistent with those found on Persian vessels found in Palestine. Younker goes on to state that the design is most seen from the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. to the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. (Stern 1982: 134-36, figs. 224-26). While the pottery evidence from Locus 10 established a Persian Period date, it is suggested here that due to the proliferation of Iron Age sherds in the locus along with the fact that the stand was discovered as being part of the assemblage of the Iron Age four-room house, that a date of Iron Age II be given for this object. The domestic setting suggests that this was possibly a small familial cult stand used for personal ritual within the home, highlighting the relevance folk religion had on the lives of everyday people living at ‘Umayri during the Iron Age.

Registration: A080071

Object A080072 (Figure 3.8) is composed of well-levigated clay with small to medium bits of temper. It appears to be thoroughly fired. The circular object was possibly part of a volute capital that was on top of an anthropomorphic figure, forming a caryatid column and has received an MP AMT of MS/AF (Table 5). It consists of a round, well-executed coil that was rolled into a spiral, with a circular opening in the center. It was clearly attached to something, as evidence of breakage can be seen along one side. Possibly dating to Iron Age IIB (Stratum 10, 9<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.), this object was found in Field A in a domestic room within the four-room house mentioned earlier in

association with Object 84.456 (Figures 3.4 and 3.7). The domestic setting is attested by a number of pounders and spindle whorls (A7K60:52) found within the vicinity of Object A080071 as well as with Object 84.456.



Figure 3.8. Object A080071 (photo by the author).

Table 5

MP AMT for Object A080071; MS/AF.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
<b>MS – Model Shrine</b>	PM – Pot Model	F – Fenestration(s)
	SM – Slab Model	P – Paint
	NM – Niche Model	A – Applique
CS – Cult Stand	CS – Cylindrical Stand	I – Incising
	SS – Slab Stand	<b>AF – Attached Figures</b>
UN – Undetermined		N - None

Similar coils are attested as being part of model shrines. In the mid 1940s the Palestine Archaeological Museum purchased a model shrine that was stated to have come from the Transjordanian area (Ilfie 1945). While the origin may be questionable, the iconography is clearly worth investigating as it provides an early example of proto-aeolic capitals, which are also attested on the model shrines from Megiddo (Zevit 2001) as well as from a 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. model shrine from Tell el-Farah North (Muller 2002:

fig. 143). Ziony Zevit states that the volute (proto-aeolic) capitals were stylized derivatives of the palm tree design and can be explained as, “resulting from a secular taming and neutralization of a widespread religious design,” (Zevit 2001: 325). He goes on to say that its meaning is charged with fertility or life-force although, as this motif was so widespread both chronologically and geographically, it is difficult to be certain as to the impact the meaning had or whether it was lost altogether with time as its aesthetic style took hold and increased in popularity.

The style of an unprovenanced model shrine from Transjordan (Muller 2002: fig. 180.a-e) is said to be of Phoenician design with the capitals on top of the columns consisting of four coils, two of which are upright mirrored by two turned downward. This could be an artistic rendering of a four-sided volute capital that is depicted three dimensionally as a headdress on a figurine.

In 1950, Amman Tomb C (dating to the Iron Age) yielded a well-formed caryatid (J1810) that included a bearded male figurine clasping his hands in front of his belly (Harding 1951) (Figure 3.9). On top of his head sits a proto-aeolic capital made up of four coils similar to Object A080071. Each coil on the figure is positioned so that the capital has all four sides represented. It can be determined that this caryatid figure was intended to stand in front of an entrance of some type, as there is evidence of breakage on top of the four coils, indicating that they were attached to something – perhaps a façade or roof of some kind. In 1945, J. H. Illfe stated that he thought there was a clear connection between the Amman Tomb C figure and the unprovenanced model shrine mentioned above as the proto-aeolic capitals appear to be very similar (Illfe 1945: 91-92).



Figure 3.9. Figurine with an aeolic capital headdress from Amman Tomb C (photo by the author).

While Object A080071 seems to be a good candidate for a volute capital, it shows no evidence that it supported a roof. In other words, there is no evidence of a break or connection point on the top portion of the coils. It possesses only a break on one side where it would have been connected to the other three coils making up the complete capital. The single break could indicate a free-standing column or a column not intended to be attached to a roof or façade, such as found on a Middle Bronze Age model shrine from Kamid el-Loz (Figure 3.10).

The other option is that the coil represents something else entirely. It differs in design from the Amman Tomb C figure and unprovenanced Transjordan model shrine in that there is a clear opening in the center. The fact that there is a clear break on one side however, lends strong support to the hypothesis that Object A080071 was indeed part of a volute capital that would most likely been part of a model shrine. The domestic setting



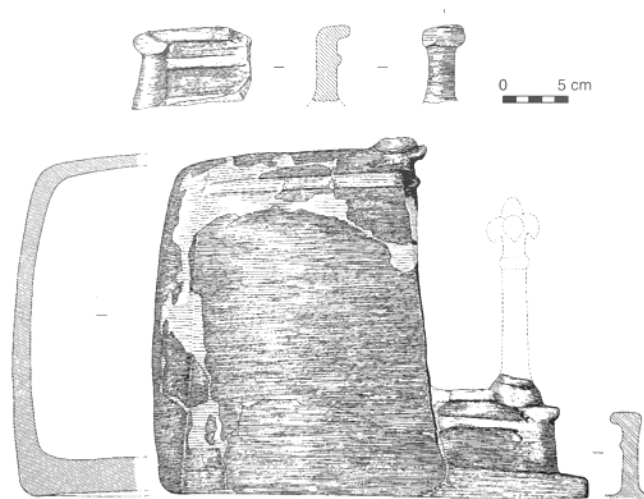


Figure 3.10. Middle Bronze Age model shrine from Kamid el-Loz showing the proposed reconstruction of a free-standing column (Muller 2002: fig. 95).

of this object and its association with the Iron Age II four-room house in Field A attests further to the use of these types of cultic objects by families. The presence of spindle whorls and pounders strongly indicates a setting that was used by woman. As woman were likely the managers of religious ritual within the home, as was suggested in Chapter 2 (see Meyers 2002), it can be suggested therefore that this object, which was part of a model shrine, was placed in an area where domestic activity took place. If this is true, it testifies to the intimate nature of these religious rituals and their application to the routine activities of daily life.

Registration: 1892/B891892

This small model shrine (only 5.7 cm in height) is almost complete and thus it has been possible to do an accurate reconstruction drawing (Figure 3.11). Unfortunately, the drawing is all we have and the whereabouts of the actual object is currently unknown. However, it is believed to be either in the Madaba Museum or at the Department of Antiquities storage facilities in Amman, Jordan. The date of the object, on the basis of

stratigraphic context (A7K62:15), was placed in the Persian period and can be described as a small niche shrine and has been given an MP AMT of MS(NM)/N (Table 6). It appears to be a miniature representation of a simple non-decorated model shrine with a single *cella*.

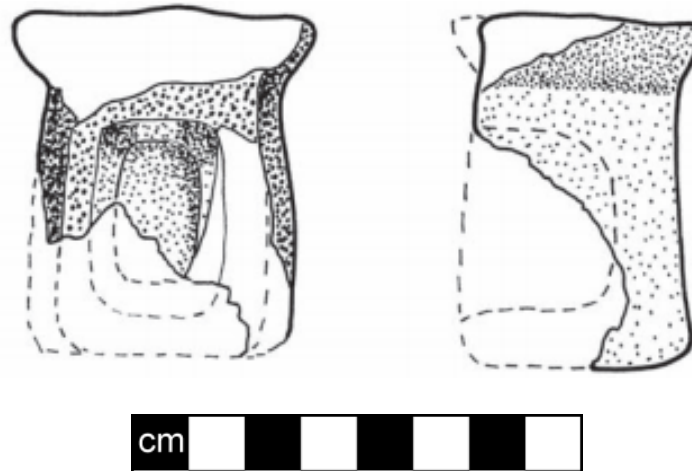


Figure 3.11. Object 1892/B891892 (drawing courtesy of La Sierra University).

Table 6

MP AMT of Object 1892/B891892; MS(NM)/N.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
<b>MS – Model Shrine</b>	PM – Pot Model	F – Fenestration(s)
	SM – Slab Model	P – Paint
	<b>NM – Niche Model</b>	A – Applique
CS – Cult Stand	CS – Cylindrical Stand	I – Incising
	SS – Slab Stand	AF – Attached Figures
UN – Undetermined		<b>N - None</b>

The drawing of the object reveals no identifiable iconography, but it seems to have a flattened roof, which could have been a placeholder for incense or small offerings. Perhaps the niche was intended to house a small figurine that was fixed to the now missing floor, or the figurine was removable, or the niche was empty and representative

of a sacred space. A decorated model *naiskos* from Sidon, dating to the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., is nearly the same height (6 cm) as Object 1892/B891892, and reveals evidence that it once contained a figurine (Bisi 1988: 353). Ackerman (2012: 553) also addresses the concept of an empty sacred space by maintaining that figures flanking the entrance to model shrines were likely guardians positioned to protect the “occupant” of the shrine who dwelt within. Whether or not this model was intended to house a deity remains unknown. As it is unusually small, it likely served personal needs which testifies to the common use of these objects in personal folk religion.

Registration: 1344

A “zoomorphic” figurine fragment (Figure 3.12) was excavated in Field A during the 1987 season (Geraty *et al.* 1988: 249, pl. 26). While the locus (A7K61:32) was dated to the Persian period, pottery readings suggest a Late Iron Age II dating. The designation of the locus was a fill layer between Walls 2 and 3. Objects associated with the locus include various grinders and pounders indicating a domestic setting.



Figure 3.12. Object 1344. Drawing of lion protome. (drawing by the author).

The figurine has a blunted face with deeply-pierced nostrils and an open mouth from which protrudes a hanging tongue. The ears are large and leonine in appearance. An attempt to simulate a mane can be detected around the face by a series of gouges made in the cheek area. The figurine has been identified as a lion and the conclusion is that this object likely flanked the entrance to a model shrine (Figure 3.13) and thus has been given an MP AMT of MS(SM)/AF (Table 7). Several reasons support this assumption: Behind

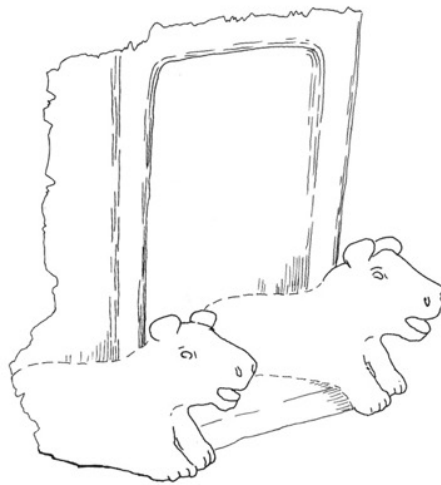


Figure 3.13. Reconstruction proposal drawing of model shrine with Object 1344 attached (left-hand figure) and proposed missing matching lion protome on the right-hand side (drawing courtesy of La Sierra University).

Table 7

MP AMT of Object 1344; MS(SM)/AF.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
<b>MS – Model Shrine</b>	PM – Pot Shrine	F – Fenestration(s)
	<b>SM – Slab Model</b>	P – Paint
	NM – Niche Model	A – Applique
CS – Cult Stand	CS - Cylindrical Stand	I – Incising
	SS – Slab Stand	<b>AF – Attached Figures</b>
UN – Undetermined		N – None

the lion's left paw is evidence of a breakage off a model shrine floor, and a broken section above the lion's back indicates that the lion was incorporated as part of the model shrine's wall or that it possibly supported a pillar. The extension of the lion's torso to the rear could also have been part of the model shrine's wall (Herr, *et al.* 2000: 229, figs. 9.12. 9.13).

Lions flanking entrances were seen as guardians and have a long tradition and are well attested in the ancient Near East, with the closest parallel to Object 1344 found in the vicinity of Mt. Nebo where two matching lion protomes with attached portions of a model shrine floor were found (Weinberg 1978: 34, fig. 4).

A tentative conclusion can be drawn that Object 1344 represents a guardian lion that was matched with a similar lion on the other side of the entrance to a niche model shrine. The lion shows evidence of being placed at the front and outer edge of an entrance and could possibly have supported a column or even a female figurine. Model shrine fragments from Khirbet 'Ataruz Object 605/607, which will be discussed in Chapter 4, reveal crouching lions that likely supported female figurines who served as columns on either side of the entrance. Whether or not the lions of Object 1344 served as bases for "columns" is unknown, but it is likely that the lions flanked the entryway or exterior of the model shrine. It cannot be concluded if the interior contained any figure or object, but comparisons to similar Iron Age model shrines propose that a consideration be given to this possibility.

Found in a similar domestic setting to that of Object A080071, this lion figure may have represented an aspect of the goddess (Asherah), and was part of a familial cult that included goddess worship. The crudeness of the construction indicates local

production by someone not concerned with aesthetics, but rather of the motif of the lion and the symbol it represented. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the harshness of life overrode the need or desire to have an object executed with a high level of artistic skill.

Registration: 6138

The clay body of this fragment (Figure 3.14) is a coarse mix with lots of grits and temper. Possessing a flat bottom, this badly-worn sherd was originally given the designation of figurine. Upon further inspection, it may be part of the base of a model shrine, but it cannot be determined for certain. Therefore, it has been assigned an MP AMT of UN/AF (Table 8). The piece has a clearly defined interior as well as an

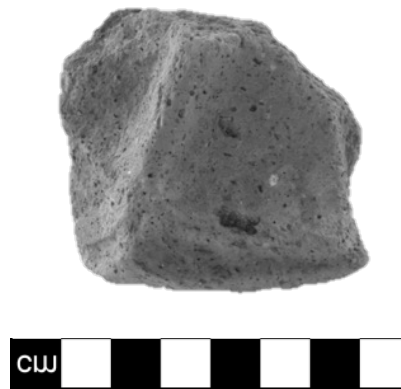


Figure 3.14. Object 6138 (photo by the author).

Table 8

MP AMT for Object 6138; UN/AF.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
MS – Model Shrine	PS – Pot Model	F – Fenestration(s)
	SM – Slab Model	P – Paint
	NM – Niche Model	A – Applique
CS – Cult Stand	CS – Cylindrical Stand	I – Incising
	SS – Slab Stand	<b>AF – Attached Figures</b>
<b>UN – Undetermined</b>		N – None

exterior surface connected with the flat bottom, which seems to indicate that Object 6138 had no floor; not unusual in model shrines, particularly with cult stands. The large cult stand from Khirbet 'Ataruz (AA01-007) has no floor; neither does the thoroughly-documented cult stand from Pella (RN 72064), (Potts and Smith 1992: pl. 70).

The exterior of Object 6138 exhibits a raised ridge that is positioned at a 45-degree angle from the base, extending upwards to the right. While the smoothed ridge could be an angled divider, it could also be a striding leg. The bottom portion of the ridge is broken where a proposed foot might have been. The sherd was found in Field B post-occupational debris and wall collapse dating to the Persian period (B7K82:2) and pottery from this locus was of a domestic nature and variable. Thus, it appears the sherd was found in a secondary context.

While the secondary context prevents the placement of this object in a confirmed setting, the clear interior and exterior combined with a clear flattened base provides the evidence needed to state that the object is probably part of a slab constructed architectural model, but its small size prevents us from identifying it as a model shrine or cult stand.

Registration: 5122

Initially part of an arbitrary fill layer in Field F dating to the Late Iron Age II/Persian period (L6189:50), this piece (Figure 3.15) was later identified as being part of a cult stand or model shrine by former Tall al-'Umayri director Larry Herr while going through old pottery. It has been given an MP AMT of MS(SM)/N (Table 9). The clay body is coarse with a lot of calcite grits and temper, and appears to be a corner base piece with a smoothed exterior. There is a slight ledge at the base of one of the sides, feasibly indicating the front of the object where a threshold might have been. The interior reveals

signs of finger joining the corner joints and one can see the join of the side slab to the base in the break, indicating this was a handmade piece consisting of slabs. Even with a such a small fragment, it can be deduced that Object 5122 was likely a model shrine that had at least one ledge at the base of one side. However, it cannot be determined whether or not it was a slab model or niche model.



Figure 3.15. Object 5122 (photo by the author).

Table 9

MP AMT for Object 5122; MS/N.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
<b>MS – Model Shrine</b>	PS – Pot Model	F – Fenestration(s)
	SM – Slab Model	P – Paint
	NM – Niche Model	A – Applique
CS – Cult Stand	CS – Cylindrical Stand	I – Incising
	SS – Slab Stand	AF – Attached Figures
UN – Undetermined		<b>N- None</b>

Registration: 6180

Unfortunately, Object 6180 (Figure 3.16) is currently missing and therefore cannot be studied in detail. It is likely somewhere in Jordan at one of the storage facilities. Analysis has been made only using the photographs that were taken. However,



it is clear that the object belongs to a model shrine and has been given an MP AMT of MS(SM)/A, AF (Table 10). It consists of an anthropomorphic head attached to a façade. Found in Field H in the earth fill (H7K20:10) of a Hellenistic Robber Trench (11), Object 6180 consists of the upper left-hand corner of what clearly appears to be an architectural



Figure 3.16. Object 6180 (photo courtesy of Douglas Clark).

Table 10

MP AMT for Object 6180; MS(SM)/A, AF.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
<b>MS – Model Shrine</b>	PS – Pot Model	F – Fenestration(s)
	<b>SM – Slab Model</b>	P – Paint
	NM – Niche Model	<b>A – Applique</b>
CS – Cult Stand	CS – Cylindrical Stand	I – Incising
	SS – Slab Stand	<b>AF – Attached Figures</b>
UN – Undetermined		N – None

element. Along the left-hand edge there is an indication of a pilaster<sup>4</sup> with a downward-turned palmette capital. Model shrines with palmettes are attested on several model

<sup>4</sup> A pilaster is an architectural term used to describe a rectangular-shaped column that typically projects from a wall.

shrines from Palestine and Transjordan, although they seem to be associated with or be a variation of volute or proto-aeolic capitals. In addition to a previously discussed model shrines from Cyprus (Figure 1.1) and Transjordan (Figure 2.6), palmette capped pilasters and columns are attested at Tell el-Farah North (Bretschneider 1991: taf. 90) (Figure 3.17),

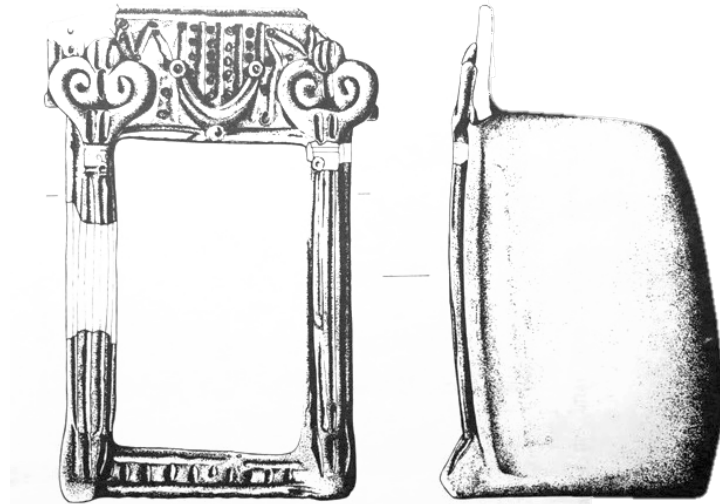


Figure 3.17. Iron Age model shrine from Tell el-Far'ah North showing upturned palmette capitals (Bretschneider 1991: abb.79a-b kat.nr.86).

at the doorway of an unprovenanced 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. model shrine from the collection of the Rockefeller Museum (Bretschneider 1991: 129-130) (Figure 3.18), as well as two Transjordanian model shrines (Figures 3.19 and 3.20), both dating from around 900 B.C.E.; one in the collection of the Israel Museum (Bretschneider 1991: 130, 234-5) (fig. 27), and one in the collection of the Reuben and Edith Hecht Museum at the University of Haifa (Bretschneider 1991: 130, 234).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See Shiloh's article, *The Proto-Aeolic Capital—The Israelite 'Timorah' (Palmette) Capital* (1977: 39-52), for more information on the history of the proto-aeolic and palmette capitals.



Figure 3.18. Iron Age II model shrine from Transjordan showing double volute columns (Israel Antiquities Authority).



Figure 3.19. Iron Age II model shrine from Transjordan with palmette capitals (Israel Antiquities Authority).



Figure 3.20. Iron Age IIA model shrine from Jordan showing palmette capitals (Bretschneider 1991: abb.81 kat.nr. 88)

Immediately to the right of the pilaster of Object 6180 is a curved opening with a human head attached to the façade above. The head appears to be mold-made with an Egyptianized hairdo consisting of a bobbed, ear-length style with bangs. Attached heads on model shrines and cult stands were not unusual, although it seems that animal heads are more common than human ones. Several of the model shrines from the *favissa* of

Yavneh have attached animal heads (Kletter, Ziffer, and Zwickel, 2010: pls. 12, 13, and 19), and a modeled human head was found as part of a cult stand from Pella (Smith and Potts, 1992: 98). The head (Figure 3.21), initially assumed to be female, was attached to



Figure 3.21. Close up of a modeled head from the Pella cult stand (photo by the author).

the right rear corner of the rim of the fragmented stand, and faced diagonally across the top portion. The head appears to be topped by a small headdress or hairstyle formed by a clay coil, impressed with ten oblique lines that resembles a rope design. The head also seems to be hand-modeled and not made from a mold.

A model shrine currently residing in the Museum of Art and Archaeology at the University of Missouri has been attributed to the Mt. Nebo region and shows what appears to be two male torsos with heads above the façade of a niche-style model shrine (Bretschneider 1991: 236). The shrine has been dated to Iron Age IIB-IIC and various cultic objects – figurines, incense cups, and miniature vessels – reportedly were discovered with it.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See Weinberg's article in *Muse* (1969: 30-48).

Similar in style to the model shrine from the University of Missouri is a model shrine that is in the private collections of Mr. Shlomo Moussaieff (Maier and Dayagi-Mendels 2007) (Figure 3.22). However, this model is unprovenanced, and can therefore

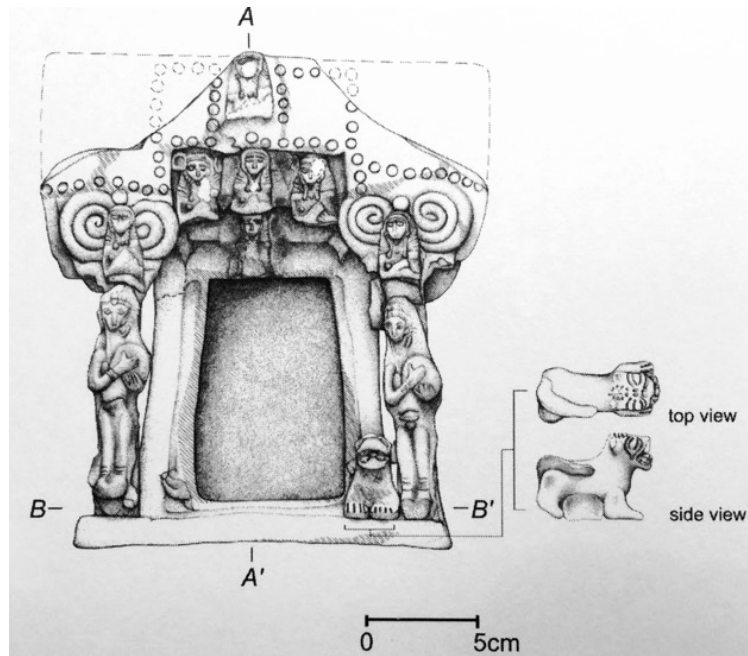


Figure 3.22. Drawing of a frontal view of the model shrine from the private collections of Mr. Shlomo Moussaieff (Maier and Dayagi-Mendels 2007: fig.1).

only be discussed for its iconographic details and potential parallels in style. Attached to the façade of this elaborately decorated model shrine are four mold-made heads attached to what appear to be hand-made torsos. The heads appear to be female and sport similar Egyptianized hairstyles similar to the head found on Object 6180.

As stated earlier, Object 6180 was found in a Hellenistic Robber Trench (11). However, the fill is clearly secondary in nature and contained several objects dating to the Iron Age. As detailed study of this object is not possible at this time, a secure date cannot be given or even assumed as analysis has been conducted only using photographs. Initially the head was assumed to be female and yet discussion about the possibility of it

being an androgynous figure cannot be ruled out. However, the presence of a head next to a palmette column attests again to the concept of goddess worship. The fact that it was found in a Hellenistic robber trench proposes a near certain secondary context. As the construction appears to be consistent with other Iron Age motifs found on model shrines, and as it was found near the open-air sanctuary complex of Field H near Objects B90012a/B90012b and the Large 'Umayri Model (B000016) discussed in the next chapter, Object 6180 can be confidently given an Iron Age date.

Registration: A040134

This large, thick piece (Figure 3.23) was found in a locus dating to the Persian period (H7K21:2). The object was found within a probable EW wall in the southern half of the square, which belongs to the Persian administrative complex in Field H. However, the nature of the find spot and its proximity to the surface lead to speculation that Object A040134 may have originated from a different location. A nearly identical piece in design and clay body (A080466) was found in a more secure location in Field M (M7K32:8) and may have been part of the same object. It has been given an MP AMT of UN/I (Table 11).



Figure 3.23. Object A040134 (photo by the author).

Table 11

MP AMT for Object A040134; UN/I.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
MS – Model Shrine	PM – Pot Model	F – Fenestration(s)
	SM – Slab Model	P – Paint
	NM – Niche Model	A – Applique
CS – Cult Stand	CS – Cylindrical Stand	<b>I – Incising</b>
	SS – Slab Stand	AF – Attached Figures
<b>UN - Undetermined</b>		N – None

Object A040134 consists of a clay body that is coarse with numerous calcite grits. It has a slipped exterior and displays an elaborate design of lines, deep puncture holes, and slashes accompanied by at least two rows of circular disks with radiating marks around a very deep hole in the center. These disks resemble rosette designs common in ancient Near Eastern art.

Rosettes are among the most frequently found and most widely-distributed ornamental motifs of the ancient Near East, originally appearing in ancient Mesopotamia. They are first recognized in the Protoliterate (ca. 3500-3000 B.C.E.) temples of Warka (Frankfort 1996: 60-61). Most scholars agree that the rosette began as an emblem of the planet Venus, as a manifestation of Inanna-Ishtar. Appearing as a six, or more commonly, an eight-pointed star, the design became stylized as it evolved onto seal carvings and wall reliefs. The star of Inanna began to be enclosed within a circular disc during the Old Babylonian Period (1830-1531 B.C.E.) (Black and Green 1992: 118) (Figure 3.24), and may have merged with the rosette of Ishtar during the Neo-Assyrian Period (911-609 B.C.E.) (Black and Green: 1992: 156), where it would have worked its way down into the Levant.



Figure 3.24. Lions and rosettes, the symbols of Ishtar from the Ishtar Gate of Neo-Babylonia, c. 575 B.C.E. Now located at the Pergamon Museum in Berlin. ([https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fi%C8%99ier:Berl%C3%ADn\\_-\\_Pergamon\\_-\\_Porta\\_d%27Ishtar\\_-\\_Lleons.JPG](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fi%C8%99ier:Berl%C3%ADn_-_Pergamon_-_Porta_d%27Ishtar_-_Lleons.JPG))

The rosette began to appear in Egypt in the Old Kingdom but did not gain an abundant foothold until the New Kingdom where representations ranging from detailed to simple can make it difficult to determine any uniform meaning.<sup>7</sup> Regardless of how it appears, it seems to be associated with divinity, specifically a goddess. This association with the goddess continued down through the ages, finding its way into Syro-Palestine and Transjordan where an association can be found in the manifestation of the Canaanite goddess Asherah (Ackerman 2000b: 509). Due to its popularity with the goddess, did the rosette take on more of an ornamental role in the Levant? While it may appear to be decorative, it likely was favored for its association with the divine, even if that divinity was not fully understood.

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<sup>7</sup> See Steng, *Das Rosettenmotive in der Kunst – und Kulturgeschichte*, (1918: 32) for a classic discussion on the astral significance of the Egyptian rosette.



An interesting point must be made concerning official seals of the Judean administration dating to the time of Josiah. To date, about 160 impressions of rosette stamps (Figure 3.25) having anywhere from six to sixteen petals have been discovered and reveal a unique local development.<sup>8</sup>



Figure 3.25. A 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. rosette stamped jar handle from Khirbet Qeiyafa (photo by Luke Chandler).

The rosette-design element of Egypt seems to have been diffused into Phoenicia where it took on local meaning and mutation, spreading outwards from ancient Palestine to the regions of Moab and Ammon where it may have been used primarily as a design element. It is in this locale of ambiguity that the design found on Object A040134 was likely created. Asherah and her variants were certainly worshiped throughout Transjordan in the Iron Ages, but it must be considered that on the fringes of Canaanite territory, where most people were illiterate pastoralists, the deeper meanings of the rosette may have been lost, although its association with divinity likely was not. Due to its popularity however, it is still found decorating objects usually associated with cultic activity. As

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<sup>8</sup> For a fascinating discussion on Judean rosette stamps, and an overall look at astral and solar symbolization manifested in the rosette design see Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God* (1998: 350-54).

Object A040134 was found near the surface, we cannot determine its original context or location but only postulate as to its meaning.

The thickness of Object A040134 indicates either a very large vessel or large model shrine. It appears to be handmade, further lending evidence to the designation of model shrine or cult stand, although we cannot be certain. The clay body has many calcite grits, and a dark core with the reddish-brown exterior, common to the Iron Ages, but again the context makes it difficult to state this with certainty. The interior seems to show evidence of smoke, which also lends itself to the possibility of being a model shrine or cult stand and not a vessel. The lack of a curvature and the thick handmade nature of the object also lends itself to a slab-made construction.

The discovery of a nearly identical piece (A080466), although smaller, was found in Field M some distance away. Could they belong to the same object? Possibly, but there is no clear way to determine this.

Registration: B006851, B006852, B006853.

These three objects are listed together due to being found in the same area (H7K21:022). Many fragments, including one that resembled a lid (B006852), were found that were assumed to belong to the same architectural model. As a result, several object numbers were given even though all the fragments clearly belong to the same object. The fragments were deemed reconstructable, but unfortunately photos of the fragments are missing or the fragments were never documented visually. The locus in which the fragments were found dated to the Late Iron II/Persian period and consisted of a plaster surface under Surface 21 in Field H. A wide variety of ceramics was found in the locus including a limestone bowl (B006754), and an alabaster bead (B006858). In

addition to missing photos, the objects themselves are missing. They are included in this study however due to the fact that the determination of an architectural model was deemed to be certain. However, an MPP AMT is unable to be assigned in this study due to the lack of visual documentation.

Registration: H7K21.24.127.1

The function of the locus (H7K21:24) where this model shrine (Figure 3.26) was found was determined to be a large open surface of beaten earth, likely associated with religious activity due to its location within the open air sanctuary complex of Field H. Located above cobble Surface 26, Locus H7K21:24 had a lot of pottery lying on it, some pieces of which were later reconstructed as the base of a large pot shrine. Along with the open air sanctuary complex itself, Object H7K21.24.127.1 has been dated to late Iron Age I (Herr and Clark 2003: 290). Accompanying the pieces of the model shrine were two figurines, further attesting to its location being connected with cultic endeavors. Object H7K21.24.127.1 has received an MP AMT of MS(PM)/A (Table 12).



Figure 3.26. Object H7K21.24.127.1 (photo by the author).

Table 12

MP AMT for Object H7K21.24.127.1; MS(PM)/A.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
<b>MS – Model Shrine</b>	<b>PM – Pot Model</b>	F – Fenestration(s)
	SM – Slab Model	P – Paint
	NM – Niche Model	<b>A – Applique</b>
CS – Cult Stand	CS – Cylindrical Stand	I – Incising
	SS – Slab Stand	AF – Attached Figures
UN – Undetermined		N – None

Made of a coarse clay mix, the body is full of temper and copious amounts of calcite grits. The object itself has a circular base and was clearly thrown on a potter's wheel. The flat base is approximately 12 cm in diameter. The pot then flares gently upwards and outwards for about 8 cm, before forming a 45-degree angle that places the walls of the pot vertical to the base. Along this angle there is a clear indication of a threshold of about 12 cm in length. The pot is broken all around the circumference where the angle begins, and therefore reconstruction was only possible for the base. Other pieces of the object were not identifiable or reconstructable, therefore we cannot determine the precise height of the object.

Like the larger and nearly complete model shrine from 'Umayri (6852/6853), this object was thrown on a wheel and began its life as a pot. Unlike the large and more complete 'Umayri shrine (6852/6853), this one appears to have a base structure almost identical to model shrine #388 + D517, from Deir 'Alla (Franken 1992: figs. 3-8) (Figure 3.27). As Object H7K21.24.127.1 was found in a context associated with the open-air sanctuary complex of Field H it could be suggested that this particular model shrine was brought to the sanctuary and placed within it. It might have held a figurine, an offering of some sort, or left empty in a representation of sacred space.



Figure 3.27. Deir Alla model shrine. Registration 388 + D517 (Frankin 1992: fig. 3).

Registration: A90304a, A90304b, A90304c

The next three fragments from Field H have been grouped together as they were given the same registration number and were found within the open-air sanctuary complex in Iron Age I levels (H7K21:28). Accompanying it were numerous sherds and fragments that showed evidence of being part of one model shrine. Discovered with this assemblage was Object No. 51 (B90012a and B90012b), which is currently missing. The three pieces are referred to here as fragments rather than objects, as they all belong to the same object (Figures 3.28, 3.29 and 3.30). The fragments have received an MP AMT of MS(SM)/A, I, AF (Table 13).



Figure 3.28. Fragment A90304a (photo by the author).



Figure 3.29. Fragment A90304b (photo by the author).



Figure 3.30. Fragment A90304c (photo by the author).

Table 13

MP AMT for Objects A90304a, A90304b, A90304c; MS(SM)/A, I, AF.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
<b>MS – Model Shrine</b>	PS – Pot Model	F – Fenestration(s)
	<b>SM – Slab Model</b>	P – Paint
	NM – Niche Model	<b>A – Applique</b>
CS – Cult Stand	CS – Cylindrical Stand	<b>I – Incising</b>
	SS – Slab Stand	<b>AF – Attached Figures</b>
UN - Undetermined		N – None

The clay of all three fragments has a very dark core, a reddish-brown surface, and gritty inclusions. All the fragments were also extremely friable and tended to crumble to the touch. As a result, all the fragments associated with the model shrine were coated with heavy layers of Acryloid B-72 in order to consolidate the salvageable material. This makes it impossible to do proper Munsell color analysis, but an examination of the style and rich iconographical content of this assemblage makes these fragments extremely important for this study. While Fragment A90304b has a darker core than Fragments A90304a and A90304c, it has been assigned as belonging to the same shrine, in that it is part of the assemblage.

Fragment A90304a belongs to what appears to be the front legs of a lion. While the right leg is broken off at the base, the left leg seems to terminate in a rough suggestion of a paw. The left leg also seems to be the edge of the left-hand side of the model shrine as the curve of the leg continues in what appears to be a 90-degree angle before having been broken off. The legs are all that remain, but we can confidently reconstruct most of the lion due to Fragment A90304c being an almost complete lion with nearly identical front legs and paws.

Fragment A90304b appears to be a top portion of a human head within a frame. The flat shape reveals a roughly squared frame that appears to have been made by a coil that was applied to the clay body while wet, and then roughly smoothed. Dark red paint is still visible on the right-hand side of the frame, indicating this model shrine had painted details in harmony with other Iron Age model shrines found in Jordan and the greater Levant such as the model shrines and cult stand from Khirbet 'Ataruz, which also show the application of painted design. Within the frame is the top portion of what appears to be a forehead with a hairstyle consisting of evenly cut bangs. Unfortunately, the sherd was broken at this point, leaving one to only speculate as to the gender or identity of the figure. If Fragment A90304b is indeed surrounded by a "frame" then it recalls the artistic "Woman at the Window" motif, which was typically used in ivories and depict women's faces, carved in relief and in the round, peering through a window frame (Gansell 2014: 47).

Consideration should be made that the figure was mold-made and then attached to the surface of the model shrine within the hand-applied frame. When looking down from the top of the head and frame, which is broken, one can see the separation between the body of the piece and what we are assuming to be the applied figure. This would be consistent with other model shrines and figurines where in many instances, the head was created in a mold and then applied to a crude body, or just applied directly to the model shrine or cult stand without being attached to a body. Several of the Yavneh model shrines had mold-made heads that were then attached to bodies that had been modeled by hand. The heads were attached to the bodies by thrusting them into the damp clay of the model shrine itself (Kletter, Ziffer, and Zwickel 2010: pl. 87).



Fragment A90304c consists of the upper portion of a lion. The upper back, neck, front feet and paws appear to have been set on top of the model shrine, perhaps above the door. Similar lions on cult stands and model shrines are known and seem to be a common motif for these types of cultic objects throughout the ancient Levant. Examples include the famous Tana'ach cult stand (Zevit 2001: figs. 4.8 and 4.9) (Figure 2.1), the Transjordanian model shrine from the private collection of Mr. Shlomo Moussaieff (Figure 3.22), and a recently discovered ceramic model shrine found at Khirbet Qeiyafa (Garfinkel and Ganor 2012: 50-65) (Figure 3.31).



Figure 3.31. Iron Age IIA model shrine from Khirbet Qeiyafa with a small lion protome at the base of the left-hand column. A matching lion head that has broken off on the right, would have graced the entrance as well (photo courtesy of Michael Hasel).

The cult stands from Tell Yavneh (Figure 3.32) seem to have the closest parallel in shape (Kletter, Ziffer and Zwickel 2010: pls. 50, 51, and 52), causing speculation that perhaps Fragments A90304c and A90304a were placed at the threshold at the base of the model, as lions were often found at the entrance to not only model shrines and cult

stands, but also temples and shrines such as the lion orthostat from the Area C temple at Hazor (Ben-Tor 1992: fig. 7.29) (Figure 3.33).

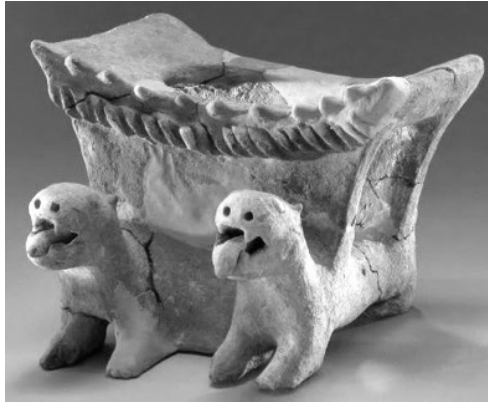


Figure 3.32. Iron Age IIA cult stand from Yavneh with two lion protomes (Leonie Padrul, Eretz Israel Museum).



Figure 3.33. Lion orthostat from the Area C temple at Hazor (photo by Mark V. Hoffman).

While the legs and paws are not executed with precision, it appears that the head of the lion was made in a mold. The face, although badly eroded, still attests to the artistry of carefully modeled eyes, a nose, and a slightly opened mouth revealing tiny rows of sharp teeth and a tongue hanging out from the middle.

To the left of the lion is a square shaped bar, extending outwards. This offers the possibility that instead of being placed at the base of the model, perhaps the lions were placed at the top, framing the lintel to the entrance of the model shrine. The bar of the façade to which the lion is attached reveals evidence of a circular channel directed inward. Might this be just the beginning of a fronton on which a lion was placed freely standing on either side?

As the feet of this lion mirror those of Fragment A90304a, it is assumed that they were identical lion figures flanking the entrance of a model shrine, near the top. The bar/lintel also reveals smoke or burn marks, especially within the circular channel. This could indicate the use of incense within the shrine itself.

If these three pieces belong to the same assemblage with Fragments B90012a and B90012b (discussed next), then it can surmised that the figurine(s) might have been placed at the entrance of the model shrine with a lion placed above it, on the façade. Fragments of a model shrine now located in the Museum of Art & Archaeology at the University of Missouri<sup>9</sup>, display two parallel lion protomes with the attached portion of the shrine's floor, similar to Object 1344 (Figures 3.12 and 3.13). This tradition of guardian lions would continue in central Transjordan well into later periods as attested by the lions present on the Iraq el-Amir palace (Dabrowski 2000: 226-29).

The combination of guardian lions with female figures indicates an association with Asherah. According to Dever (2008: 55), "some of the clearest physical evidence for the existence of a cult of Asherah is the growing collection of small house shrines."

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<sup>9</sup> These model shrine fragments (Reg. #68.64), dated to Iron IIB-C, were purchased by the museum at an unknown date. The museum claims that they come from an archaeological excavation near the Mt. Nebo region of Jordan. However, no information about that excavation is presented leading to questions about its origins.

These model shrines seem to share several iconographic motifs including guardian lions or crouching lions serving as column bases near the entrance. Dever (2008: 55) goes on to state that most if not all of these small shrines come from Transjordan and have been identified as Moabite and date from the 9<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. The overall size of the model shrine to which these fragments belonged cannot be determined, but it can be concluded that these fragments belonged to a model shrine and attest to the worship of the goddess, likely Asherah. The association with the open-air sanctuary complex of Field H places it in the context of a model shrine having been placed within or nearby the sanctuary. The existing fragments attest that this was also a highly decorated model with figures and applique that were applied with some artistic skill.

Registration: B90012a/B90012b

These two fragments (Figure 3.34) were found together in the same context (H7K21) as the previously mentioned three fragments (A90304a, A90304b and A90304c) and are also among the 'Umayri objects currently missing. Fragments B90012a and B90012b are made up of two separate pieces that appear to be pieces of matching figurines from a model shrine. B90012a/B90012b has been given an MP AMT of MS/AF (Table 14).



Figure 3.34. Fragments B90012a and B90012b (photos courtesy of La Sierra University).

Table 14

MP AMT for Fragments B90012a/B90012b; MS/AF.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
<b>MS – Model Shrine</b>	PS – Pot Model	F – Fenestration(s)
	SM – Slab Model	P – Paint
	NM – Niche Model	A – Applique
CS – Cult Stand	CS – Cylindrical Stand	I – Incising
	SS – Slab Stand	<b>AF – Attached Figures</b>
UN - Undetermined		N – None

The more complete figure (B90012a), although initially appearing to be female, lacks some key features; namely breasts. The hands are clasped in front, under a swollen belly and covering the pubic area in a similar pose found on other female figurines such as one found at Tell Beit Mirsim (Keel and Uehlinger 1998: fig. 122b), and from a Bronze Age terracotta plaques associated with Astarte worship (Cornelius 2014: 98-100, fig. 14.d). However, the lack of breasts compels the consideration that perhaps this is an androgynous figure similar to the ones found on the Large ‘Umayri Model Shrine

(B000016) discussed in Chapter 4. Based on photographs, the body of the figure appears to be hand-made, while the head seems mold-made based on the finer shape and rendering of features.

The more complete figurine is attached to a piece that appears to belong to what would be the right side of an entrance to a model shrine. To the left of the figurine is a raised area, which may represent a pillar or simply the edge of the entrance to the model. The lower torso of a second figure with the same crossed arm design was also found and was likely attached to the other side of the entrance giving the shrine matching figurines flanking the entrance.

With this limited information, a categorization of these fragments into the Madaba Plains Architectural Model Typology can be placed as MS/AF. Because further documentation is lacking, there is not enough information to determine what type of model shrine these objects come from. However, it is clear that the female figures point to goddess worship and the association with the open-air sanctuary complex again attests to the prolific use of architectural models as modes of communication with deities. The finer work of the existing figure (B90012a) indicates that a higher skill level was utilized to produce the model. No paint or other indicators can be detected.

#### Registration: B020011

This little lion head (Figure 3.35) was found on a beaten-earth surface near Walls 2 and 5 (L6K78:014). Part of the Hellenistic complex in Field L, the potential late date of this zoomorphic figure creates a conundrum as model shrines and cult stands, while still used, become increasingly rare in the later periods. However, the presence of Iron Age I and Iron Age II pottery fragments creates the possibility of Object B020011 being of an

Iron Age date. Unfortunately, the location of this object is currently unknown so analysis could only be conducted through photographs. It has been given an MP AMT of UN/AF (Table 15).



Figure 3.35. Object B020011 (photo courtesy of La Sierra University).

Table 15

MP AMT for Object B020011; UN/AF.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
MS – Model Shrine	PM – Pot Model	F – Fenestration(s)
	SM – Slab Model	P – Paint
	NM – Niche Model	A – Applique
CS – Cult Stand	CS – Cylindrical Stand	I – Incising
	SS – Slab Stand	<b>AF – Attached Figures</b>
<b>UN - Undetermined</b>		N – None

Object B020011, if indeed attached to an architectural model and not part of a freestanding figurine, was likely secured to a model in a similar fashion as Fragment A90304c (Figure 3.30), and the Yavneh model (Figure 3.32). The style however, is much different than that of Fragment A90304c, calling into question the date. Lions attached to architectural models seem to have been most prolific during the Iron Age where their presence indicated a connection with deities, most prominently (esp. in Iron Age II) a

goddess (Strawn 2005: 97). They were also associated with protective powers (Strawn 2005: 100). This makes sense considering that the lions found on architectural models, especially model shrines, are located at the entrance or “doorway” to the model (this concept is explored further in Chapter 6). While lions were also known to represent the power of kings, the association with a goddess and protective power is more likely as the lions on architectural models are nearly always accompanied by attached female figures. Their presence attests to the significance of the lion image in cultic ritual.

By the end of the Iron Age, lion imagery almost completely disappeared (Strawn 2005: 107). This absence allows a hypothesis to develop that perhaps Object B020011 was found in a secondary context in the Hellenistic layers. Another signifier of an Iron Age date is found in the mouth of the lion. Object B020011 has an open mouth with an extended tongue. While the expression of Object B020011 may appear benign and even comical, the original Syrian motif of a roaring lion, with mouth open and tongue extended, appears first in glyptic art dating to the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C.E. (Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 190). Eventually the motif transferred to other image bearing objects such as figurines and can be found prolifically in ancient Palestine and Transjordan throughout the Iron Ages (Strawn 2005: 191).

The appearance of Object B020011 is significantly different than Fragment A90304c. This might be explained from the viewpoint discussed in Chapter 2 of how each object was created according to the personal style and ability of the artisan. Fragment A90304c has a mold-made head. Molds would allow an image to be created over and over, but it might also assure that the lions placed on either side of a model would match exactly in size and appearance, if that type of precision was desired.



Object B020011 is handmade much like the lions found on the Yavneh models (Figure 3.32). Both animals have an open mouth with the tongue hanging out as seen in the Ta'anach stand (Figure 9), but Object B020011 has the addition of what appears to be an Egyptian *uraeus* on its forehead. Considering that much Egyptian influence found in Transjordan filtered down through Phoenicia (which stretched through what is now Syria, Lebanon, and northern Israel) during the Iron Age, the combination of the popular Syrian roaring lion with Egyptian influences would make sense. In addition, during the Ramesside Dynasties 19-20, which coincided with the end of the New Kingdom and collapse of the Bronze Age, there was an abundance of roaring lion metaphors (Strawn 2005: 268).

This motif would have slowly worked its way into the iconography of Palestine and Transjordan, albeit with different meanings or associations. Other examples of the roaring lion motif include an Iron Age IIB-C terracotta figure found near Beron, at Beit Aula (Keel and Uehlinger 1998: fig. 206a), and a 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. column base from Tell Taynat (Strawn 2005: fig. 4.300). Even though Object B020011 is missing, analysis via the excellent photos allows for the conclusion that this object may have been part of a model shrine dating to the Iron Age. The lion imagery alludes to goddess worship, painting an ever more clear picture of how important the worship of female deities, such as Asherah, were to the people living at 'Umayri during the Iron Ages.

Registration: A080263

Found in Field A near the surface in a locus dating to the Islamic period (M7K24:2), this sherd (Figure 3.36). was undoubtedly discovered in a secondary context. The clay body is coarse with many inclusions and the surface seems to be covered with a

creamy white slip. The object has a clearly defined edge framed by three incised lines that likely surrounded the entire fenestration of which this edge seems to be a part. The beginning of a curve marking a 90-degree angle can be detected at the base of the finished edge indicating that this edge likely belonged to an opening; perhaps a window. Object A080263 has been given an MP AMT of UN/F, I (Table 16).



Figure 3.36. Object A080263 (photo by the author).

Table 16

MP AMT for Object A080263; UN/F, I.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
MS – Model Shrine	PM – Pot Model	<b>F – Fenestration(s)</b>
	SM – Slab Model	P – Paint
	NM – Niche M	A – Applique
CS – Cult Stand	CS – Cylindrical Stand	<b>I – Incising</b>
	SS – Slab Stand	AF – Attached Figures
<b>UN – Undetermined</b>		N – None

The walls of the sherd are thick, possibly indicating a possibly large slab-made fenestrated model shrine or cult stand, but it cannot be determined which type of

architectural model this object may have been a part of. Due to its secondary context, Object A080263 is difficult to place. The common practice of utilizing architectural models in religious ritual during the Iron Age at 'Umayri is apparent, therefore convention states that this object be put within an Iron Age context as architectural models do not appear in the Islamic period (M7K24:2) The clay matrix of the piece is also consistent with other Iron Age bodies.

Registration: A040067

The many pieces that make up this multi-fenestrated architectural model (Figures 3.37 and 3.38) were initially not recognized during excavation, but were rather



Figure 3.37. Object A040067. Showing the bottom of model and one corner (photo by the author).

discovered later as belonging to one model from the vast amount of pottery collected from the courtyard sanctuary in Field H. Two pieces that appear to belong to this model

were given the numbers A040067 (from Locus 7K32:69) and A060306 (from Locus 7K12:44). However, they do not seem to connect to any of the other sherds. It was only after consolidation and reconstruction of several of the larger pieces that this model took



Figure 3.38. Showing the top of Object A040067 with two corners (photo by the author).

on its clear slab-made, squared appearance.<sup>10</sup> The entire object is fragmented with too many pieces that clearly belong, but do not fit together with other existing pieces. Nevertheless, the decision was made to give all the sherds that can be confidently assigned as belonging to this model one object registration number and location (H7K32.69) even though various sherds came from different squares and loci. It has been given an MP AMT of UN/F (Table 17).

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<sup>10</sup> An undergraduate student at the time, Matthew Murdoch from La Sierra University, was responsible for the identification of these pieces as all belonging to the same model. He was also responsible for their reconstruction, along with reconstruction of Object H7K21.24.127.1 (Figure 3.26).

Table 17

MP AMT for Object A040067; US/F.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
MS – Model Shrine	PM – Pot Model	<b>F – Fenestration(s)</b>
	SM – Slab Model	P – Paint
	NM – Niche Model	A – Applique
CS – Cult Stand	CS – Cylindrical Stand	I – Incising
	SS – Slab Stand	AF – Attached Figures
<b>UN - Undetermined</b>		N – None

The reconstruction that did take place gives enough of a picture where it can be concluded that this model was large and had a square shape (length and width of about 23 cm) with no floor, but the overall height cannot be determined. At least two “windows” seem to be present on each side, with several more fenestrations identified, although there is no way of placing them in any pattern. What is believed to be the top portion of the model (Figure 3.37), terminates in an open “roof.” There is no paint, slip, or applied design on the existing sherds.

While the height is unknown, Object A040067 appears to have been taller than its width and length, making it a better candidate for a cult stand rather than a model shrine. There is no presence of burning or smoke, and the lack of a roof indicates that this object may not have been intended for offerings or the burning of incense. However, the open roof could have been intended for the placement of another vessel that was removable, but this is pure conjecture.

The scattering of sherds across the Late Iron Age I open sanctuary floor complex of Field H, with several sherds found elsewhere in other squares along with the other smashed model shrines, suggests that the majority of the cultic material was left in place and covered up by succeeding surfaces as the courtyard continued to be used. Based on the evidence, it cannot be determined with certainty whether Object A040067 was a

model shrine or cult stand, but it is certainly a slab-made construction. It's location within the open-air sanctuary complex of Field H infers that it was placed there along with the many other architectural models associated with the sanctuary.

Registration: A080160

Located near the surface in Field M, the locus (M7K33:2) from which this object (Figure 3.39) comes dates to the Byzantine period. The shallowness of the loci in proximity to the surface presumes a general mix of secondary deposits. Object A080160 consists of a thoroughly fired body with a profuse amount of calcite grits. The object itself consists of a bar of clay with three vertical rows of small impressed circles that were likely made by pressing a hollow reed into the wet clay. The object has two finished edges making it appear to have been a divider of sorts that may have separated two openings in a model shrine or cult stand. The bar has a slight vertical curve, hinting at the roundness of the overall object. This could suggest that the object to which this piece belongs was a tall, cylindrical cult stand, which commonly bore multiple fenestrations. Object A080160 has been given an MP AMT of CS(CS)/F, I (Table 18).



Figure 3.39. Object A080160 (photo by the author).

Table 18

MP AMT for Object A080160; CS(CS)/F, I.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
MS – Model Shrine	PM – Pot Model	<b>F – Fenestration(s)</b>
	SM – Slab Model	P – Paint
	NM – Niche Model	A – Applique
<b>CS – Cult Stand</b>	<b>CS – Cylindrical Stand</b>	<b>I – Incising</b>
	SS – Slab Stand	AF – Attached Figures
UN – Undetermined		N – None

Cylindrical cult stands usually were made either in a one or a two-part form. The most numerous are the two-part stands comprised of a cylindrical base, often fenestrated and shaped like a cone, and a bowl that sat on top (May 1935: pl. XX, and Rowe 1940: pl. LVIIA:4). With a long history in the ancient Near East, cylindrical cult stands date back to at least the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium B.C.E. where their existence is noted in glyptic art (Gilmour 2014: 82-83).

Their popularity increased during the Late Bronze Age and reached a peak in the early Iron Age. Thus, it is not surprising that we would find evidence of cylindrical stands at ‘Umaryi. The context of a surface find demonstrates the likely secondary deposition of the sherd, which is not uncommon for the Hellenistic period layers on the tell. Due to its secondary context it can be concluded that this piece may also date to the Iron Age due to its probable identification as being part of an architectural model, and due to its clay matrix having a similar appearance to those of other Iron Age ceramic fragments.

Registration: A100205

This plaque-shaped object (Figure 3.40) from Field M was found within a cobble surface (Locus M7K33:14) dating to the Late Iron Age II/Persian period. The thoroughly fired terracotta body has many calcite grits and rounded, squared edges that could potentially be part of a model shrine façade or fronton. The object appears to be finished on both sides, meaning that the intention was that this was a protruding piece that was meant to be seen in the round. The object could also be part of a matching pair with both pieces originally being placed on opposite sides of a model shrine or cult stand, representing horns or the shape of a standing stone. It has been given an MP AMT of UN/AF (Table 19).



Figure 3.40. Object A100205 (photo by the author).

Table 19

MP AMT for Object A100205; UN/AF.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
MS – Model Shrine	PS – Pot Model	F – Fenestration(s)
	SM – Slab Model	P – Paint
	NM – Niche Model	A – Applique
CS – Cult Stand	CS – Cylindrical Stand	I – Incising
	SS – Slab Stand	<b>AF – Attached Figures</b>
<b>UN – Undetermined</b>		N – None



While this piece could be part of a façade, its plain, rectangular shape also lends itself to be considered as a type of kind of aniconistic feature. It could be a way of representing a god without showing any features. According to Mettinger (2006: 275), aniconism was widespread in the ancient Near East and standing stones as well as plaques, could represent gods in a non-anthropomorphic way.

It cannot be determined if the fragment is from a model shrine or cult stand. Even though the “Attached Figure” category refers to zoomorphic or anamorphic figures, the MPP AMT ornamentation category of AF can be assigned as the shape of Object A100205 lends itself to the possible representation of a figure, attesting to the concept of the divine.

#### Registration: A080466

The locus where Object A080466 (Figure 3.41) was discovered was identified as being a fill layer of possible post-abandonment debris (M7K34:8). Located beneath cobble Surfaces 3, 6, and 7 in Field M, the locus dates to the Iron Age II. This object is nearly identical in clay matrix and appearance to previously discussed Object A040134, which was found in H7K21:2 with the clay body being coarse, with numerous calcite grits. It is highly plausible therefore, that Objects A040134 (Figure 3.23) and A080466 were part of the same object even though they were found in different fields. It has been given an MP AMT of UN/I (Table 20). Strengthening this argument is the fact that Object A040134 was found within a surface locus (H7K21:2), which makes it plausible that it was deposited in a secondary context.



Figure 3.41. Object A080466 (photo by the author).

Table 20

MP AMT for Object A080466; UN/I.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
MS – Model Shrine	PM – Pot Model	F – Fenestration(s)
	SM – Slab Model	P – Paint
	NM – Niche Model	A – Applique
CS – Cult Stand	CS – Cylindrical Stand	<b>I – Incising</b>
	SS – Slab Stand	AF – Attached Figures
<b>UN – Undetermined</b>		N – None

Like Object A040134, Object A080466 has a slipped exterior and displays an elaborate design of lines, deep puncture holes, and slashes accompanied by at least two rows of circular disks (rosettes), with radiating marks around a very deep hole in the center. It also appears to have been slab-made.

### Conclusion

By far, the largest concentration of model shrine/cult stand fragments from Tall al-‘Umayri come from Field H. Located at the southwestern corner of the site,

excavations in Field H began in 1994; the preliminary purpose being the investigation of the southern expansion of the Ammonite administrative complex in Field A, directly to the north. A major architectural feature of this field was first excavated in 2000 and has since been identified as an extensive open courtyard used for cultic purposes such as a shrine or sanctuary (Herr 2007: 136). Beginning with Phase 9 (Late Iron Age I), excavations began to reveal cobbled, earth, and plaster surfaces under the Late Iron Age I surface (Figure 3.42). The pottery forms within this phase were used to interpret this space as being dated to Late Iron Age I due to the typology of the *pithoi* rims, which were

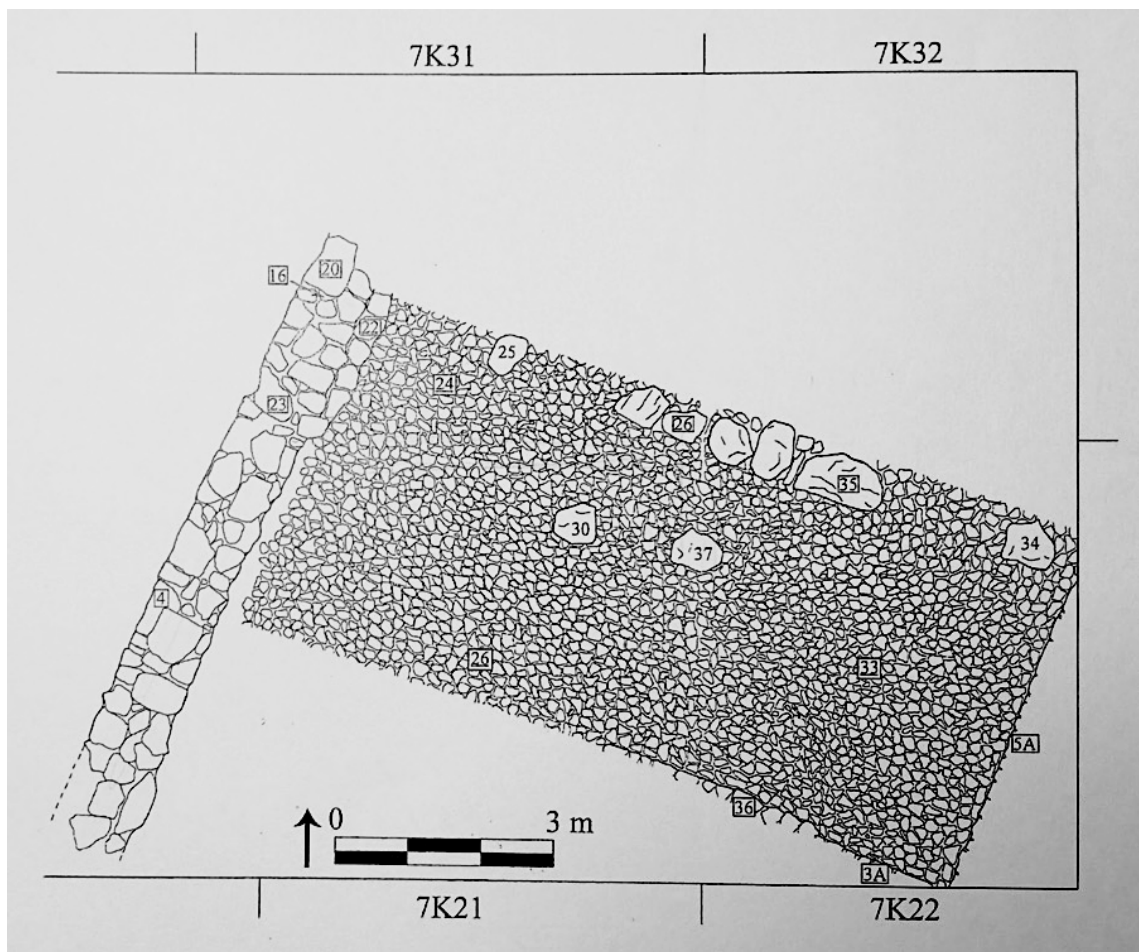


Figure 3.42. The Late Iron Age I cobble surface of Field H. (drawing courtesy of Larry Herr).

identical to those found in the storeroom of Field A (Herr & Clark 2003: 290).

During the 1996 season, a storeroom containing 18 reconstructable collar-rim pithoi was exposed in the Phase 10 (Iron Age I) layers of Field A. Located on top of the deep, brick-laden destruction of Phase 11, these pithoi were leaning against one of the two walls of the storeroom. This room was identified by the directors as being associated with a similar storeroom found in the 1984 and 1987 seasons in Field B. The two storerooms, roughly aligned north-south, were dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. and have their parallels in the collar-rim pithoi found at Sahab. (Herr, Geraty, LaBianca, Younker, and Clark 1997: 147-48).

No small finds were located directly above the cobbles of Field H, but a large number were found above, on the many earth and plaster surfaces covering the cobbles. Among these objects were architectural model fragments that, when reconstructed, revealed at least three separate identifiable model shrines (Herr & Clark 2003: 290) and doubtless several more based on the many architectural fragments associated with the sanctuary complex. The finds were located in large concentrations of ash. As many of the potential model shrine fragments found at Tall al-‘Umayri show evidence of smoke or burning, this strengthens the argument that model shrines were an integral part of Ammonite (or Israelite) religious practices which involved the presentation of burnt offerings or incense. The plethora of other possible model shrine and cult stand fragments near the courtyard, mostly within a secondary context, further supports the concept that not only did these architectural models have a specific religious function, but they were quite common at Tall al-‘Umayri during the late Iron Age I and Iron Age II periods.

A total of 64 potential architectural model fragments have been identified thus far from the ceramic collections of Tall al-‘Umayri. The majority of the fragments originate in Iron Age II layers. 19 of these fragments have been described in detail above. It is possible and even to be expected that more fragments are waiting to be identified with further study and that more may come to light with future excavations. Scholars are still learning about architectural models as their fragments are only now beginning to be acknowledged as excavators become more experienced about identifying unusual sherds. Over the years, it is likely that hundreds, if not thousands, of architectural model fragments from Jordan have been misidentified as *tabun* or basin fragments and thrown into the sherd pile unless there existed an obvious architectural or figurative element. While many of the fragments at ‘Umayri are only possibilities, numerous fragments have been identified as probable or certain. By consciously going through all the pot sherds that were brought back to La Sierra University, sherds have been pulled out that might have otherwise been ignored. This has introduced the concept that architectural models were a lot more prevalent than previously thought. One of the goals of this study to bring more awareness of these fragments and their presence in Iron Age sites throughout Jordan, but especially in the Madaba Plains region.

Based on the above data and documentation of identified sherds, it is clear that Tall al-‘Umayri had a thriving architectural model clientele during the Iron Ages, particularly in the Iron Age II period. The vast variety of forms attests the utilization of a variety of styles and variations of motifs within the same archaeological period. This confirms Claudia Suter’s theory of collective memory and the mobility of style which, “...may indicate a deliberate blurring of cultural boundaries across the Levant” (Suter

2008). The many motifs pointing to Asherah worship; lion figures palmettes, rosettes, and female figures, indicate the presence of folk religion and more specifically, religious practices that may have concerned women in particular as discussed in Chapter 2.

While it is impossible to go back and recover lost data from seasons past, perhaps we can now move forward with more careful examination of sherds and learn to recognize the markers that identify a sherd as being a potential architectural model fragment. By doing this, scholars can collectively forge ahead in creating a better understanding of the religious practices of Iron Age Jordan. The majority of the fragments come from Field H and while the fragments come from loci dating from the Early Bronze Age up through the Byzantine and Modern periods, the overwhelming majority of fragments belong to the Iron Age, specifically Iron Age II, giving a clearer picture of Iron Age cult at 'Umayri in general. It can be concluded that during the early to mid-Iron Age II period, cult at 'Umayri involved the use of model shrines and cult stands alike; each unique and therefore likely serving slightly different purposes all while serving the overall needs of the community. The next few pages are composed of tables (Tables 21 through 27) that document 64 fragments identified as being part of architectural models at Tall al-'Umayri.

Table 21  
Field A Architectural Model Fragments

Reg #	Cert.	Sq.	Loc.	Weight	Height	Width	Ext. Munsell	Int. Munsell	Core Munsell	Slip/Paint	Loc. Date	Year Excavated	Typology
*A060113	Poss	7J49	2	34 gm	5.8 cm	2.6 cm	**	**	**	Ext.	Isl	2006	UN/AF
547	Poss	7K40	3	460 gm	12 cm	12.8 cm	10YR 8/2	10YR 8/2	10YR 2/1	Ø	L12	1984	**
*A040146	Prob	7K40	10	86.6 gm	6 cm	5.7 cm	7.5 8/2	5YR 6/6	7.5YR 6/1	Ext. paint 5YR 4/4	I2	2004	MS(SM)/P, A
2093	Poss	7K42	1	50.7 gm	5.12 cm	3.44 cm	7.5YR 6/3	**	5YR 6/7	Ø	Mod	1989	**
*84.456	Cert	7K50	10	**	40 cm	19 cm	2.5YR 6/8	**	2.5YR 0/5	Ø	L12/Per	1984	CS(SS)/I
*A080071	Prob	7K60	52	17.3 gm	3.6 cm	3.9 cm	7.5YR 7/4	**	7.5YR 7/4	Ø	I2	2008	MS/AF
5134	Prob	7K62	6	301.7 gm	14.9 cm	11.1 cm	7.5YR 8/4	5YR 6/6	5YR 4/1	Ext.	Per	1989	**
2094	Poss	7K62	11	28.2 gm	3.4 cm	4.6 cm	2.5YR 6/4	2.5YR 5/1	2.5YR 6/4	Ø	Per	1989	**
*1892/ B891892	Cert	7K62	15	**	5.4 cm	4.3 cm	**	**	**	Ø	Per	1989	MS(NM)/N
6678	Prob	7K70	48	33.9 gm	5.1 cm	1.6 – 4.1 cm	10YR 7/2	10YR 6/4	10YR 5/1	“Snake” 10YR 8/3	E11	1998	**
*1344	Cert	7K61	32	**	7.3 cm	7.3 cm	**	**	**	Ø	Per	1987	MS(SM)/AF

\* detailed study in Chapter 3  
 \*\* no information, no availability, or not evident  
 Ø none

Table 22

## Field B Architectural Model Fragments

Reg #	Cert.	Sq.	Loc.	Weight	Height	Width	Ext. Munsell	Int. Munsell	Core Munsell	Slip/Paint	Loc. Date	Year Excavated	Typology
A020261	Prob	8K12	6	47.8 gm	6 cm	3.3 cm	**	**	**	Ø	**	2002	**
A90261	Poss	8K12	6	44.7 gm	6.4 cm	3.5 cm	5YR 5/6	5YR 6/1	5YR 5/6	Paint 7.5YR 7/4	**	2002	**
698/ 87.0041	Poss	7K80	2	41.2 gm	8 cm	5.3 cm	7.5YR 7/4	7.5YR 5/3	7.5YR 5/1	Ø	**	1989	**
*6138	Poss	7K82	2	75.3 gm	5.5 cm	6 cm	5YR 6/6	5YR 6/6	5YR 5/1	Ø	Per	1989	UN/AF

Table 23

## Field D Architectural Model Fragments

Reg #	Cert.	Sq.	Loc.	Weight	Height	Width	Ext. Munsell	Int. Munsell	Core Munsell	Slip/Paint	Loc. Date	Year Excavated	Typology
1901	Poss	5K97	39	32.4 gm	5.32 cm	4.5 cm	10YR 6/3	10YR 5/1	10YR 5/1	Ø	EB3	1989	**



Table 24

Field F Architectural Model Fragments

Reg #	Cert.	Sq.	Loc.	Weight	Height	Width	Ext. Munsell	Int. Munsell	Core Munsell	Slip/ Paint	Loc. Date	Year Excavated	Typology
*5122	Prob	6189	50	74 gm	4.5 cm	4.45 cm	5YR 7/4	5YR 7/4	5YR 5/1	Ø	L12/Per	1989	MS/N

Table 25

## Field H Architectural Model Fragments

Reg #	Cert.	Sq.	Loc.	Weight	Height	Width	Ext. Munsell	Int. Munsell	Core Munsell	Slip/ Paint	Loc. Date	Year Excavated	Typology
A040224	Prob	7K11	29	371.4 gm	12.5 cm	13 cm	10YR 7/4	7.5YR 7/4	7.5YR 4/1	Ø	Per	2004	
A040107	Prob	7K11	31	272.4 gm	11.8 cm	11.6 cm	2.5YR 6/6	5YR 6/6	5YR 4/1	Ø	L12/Per	2004	
A040108	Poss	7K11	84	255 gm	10.5 gm	12 cm	2.5YR 6/6	5YR 7/6	5YR 4/1	Ø	**	**	
A040131	Poss	7K11	84	143.6 gm	10.7 cm	8.24 cm	10YR 8/3	10YR 5/1	10YR 5/1	Ø	**	**	
A040132	Prob	7K11	84	401.4 gm	14 cm	12.56 cm	7.5YR 7/6	7.5YR 7/6	7.5YR 5/1	Ø	**	**	
A060306	Poss	7K12	44	48.8 gm	5.2 cm	5.2 cm	10YR 6/1	10YR 6/1	10YR 7/1	Ø	L12/Per	2006	
6106	Prob	7K20	3	77.4 gm	7.73 cm	6.11 cm	7.5YR 7/6	7.5YR 7/6	10YR 3/1	Ø	Mod	1996	
6156a	Poss	7K20	3	111.7 gm	2.6 cm	2.4 cm	5YR 6/4	5YR 6/6	5YR 6/1	ext slip 7.5YR 8/2	Mod	1996	
6156b	Poss	7K20	3	60 gm	7.62 cm	5.53 cm	7.5YR 7/4	5YR 7/6	2.5YR 5/1	Ø	Mod	1996	
6085	Poss	7K20	3	70 gm	8.65 cm	4.06 cm	7.5YR 7/4	7.5YR 7/4	7.5YR 5/1	Ø	Mod	1996	

Table 25 - Continued  
Field H Architectural Model Fragments

Reg #	Cert.	Sq.	Loc.	Weight	Height	Width	Ext. Munsell	Int. Munsell	Core Munsell	Slip/Paint	Loc. Date	Year Excavated	Typology
6085	Poss	7K20	3	70 gm	8.65 cm	4.06 cm	7.5 YR 7/4	7.5 YR 7/4	7.5YR 5/1	Ø	Mod	1996	
6180	Cert	7K20	10	**	**	**	**	**	**	Ø	Hell	1996	
A040134	Poss	7K21	2	239 gm	8.1 cm	14.1 cm	10YR 7/3	10YR 6/3	2.5Y 4/1	Ø	Per	2004	MS(SM)/ A, AF
6189	Poss	7K21	6	59 gm	5.77 cm	4.51 cm	2.5YR 6/4	5YR 5/2	2.5YR 5/6	Ø	Per	1996	UN/I
*B006851/ B006852/ B006853	Cert	7K21	22	**	38 cm	top - 25 cm bot - 30 cm	10YR 7/3	10YR 6/2	7.5YR 5/1	ext pnt 5YR 4/6	LII/ Per	2002	
*H7K21.24.127.1	Cert	7K21	24	1890 gm	5.2 cm	29.2 cm	5YR 6/6	5YR 6/6	5YR 6/1	Ø	LII	2002	Undeter- mined
*A90304a	Cert	7K21	28	69 gm	3.9 cm	5 cm	**	**	**	Ø	LII	2002	MS(PM)/ A
*A90304b	Cert	7K21	28	94 gm	4.9 cm	6.3 cm	**	**	**	Ø	LII	2002	MS(SS)/ A, I, AF
*A90304c	Cert	7K21	28	133.6 gm	7.4 cm	6.7 cm	**	**	**	Ø	LII	2002	MS(SS)/ A, I, AF
*B90012a/ B90012b	Cert	7K21	Cleanup	**	**	**	10R 6/4	**	**	Ø	Mod	2002	MS(SS)/ A, I, AF
B945067	Poss	7K30	2	27.1 gm	4.8 cm	5 cm	5YR 6/6	7.5YR 5/1	7.5YR 5/1	Ø	Mod	2008	MS/AF

Table 25 – Continued

Field H Architectural Model Fragments

Reg #	Cert.	Sq.	Loc.	Weight	Height	Width	Ext. Munsell	Int. Munsell	Core Munsell	Slip/ Paint	Loc. Date	Year Excavated	Typology
A120032	Poss	7K32	Balk	143 gm	6.30 cm	7.3 cm	2.5YR 5/6	2.5YR 5/6	2.5YR 5/1	Ø	Mod	**	
5042	Poss	7K32	1	52.2 gm	4.57 cm	3.60 cm	5YR 6/6 – 5YR 6/1	5YR 6/1	5YR 6/1	Ø	Mod	1994	
5208	Poss	7K32	18	242 gm	8.5 cm	13.3 cm	10YR 7/3	10YR 5/2	10YR 5/1	Ø	Per	1994	
*A040067	Cert	7K12 7K24 7K32	69	**	**	**	**	**	**	Ø	L12/Per	2004	UN/F
H7K11/12/ 21/22/31:01	Prob	7K11/12/ 21/22/31	**	78.5 gm	11.5	4.3 cm	5YR 6/6	5YR 5/2	5YR 5/1	Ø	**	**	
H7K11/12/ 21/22/31:02	Prob	7K11/12/ 21/22/31	**	61 gm	8.7 cm	5.1 cm	5YR 6/4	5YR 6/4	5YR 6/1	Ø	**	**	
H7K11/12/ 21/22/31:03	Prob	7K11/12/ 21/22/31	**	287.4 gm	11.4 cm	10.3 cm	7.5YR 6/2	7.5YR 6/2	7.5YR 5/1	Ø	**	**	
H7K11/12/ 21/22/31:04	Poss	7K11/12/ 21/22/31	**	57.1 gm	6 cm	7.1 cm	10YR 7/3	10YR 7/3	10YR 5/1	Ø	**	**	
H7K11/12/ 21/22/31:05	Poss	7K11/12/ 21/22/31	**	54.5 gm	9 cm	4.6 cm	7.5YR 7/2	7.5YR 5/2	5YR 4/1	ext slip	**	**	
H7K11/12/ 21/22/31:06	Poss	7K11/12/ 21/22/31	**	51 gm	5.23 cm	8.5 cm	10YR 7/3	7.5YR 6/4	10YR 6/1	Ø	**	**	
H7K11/12/ 21/22/31:07	Prob	7K11/12/ 21/22/31	**	470.5 gm	22.1 cm	10.4 cm	7.5YR 7/2	7.5YR 7/3	7.5YR 5/1	Ø	**	**	
H7K11/12/ 21/22/31:08	Prob	7K11/12/ 21/22/31	**	165.1 gm	9.3 cm	6.9 cm	7.5YR 7/3	5YR 6/4	5YR 6/4	Ø	**	**	

Table 25 – Continued

Field H Architectural Model Fragments

Reg #	Cert.	Sq.	Loc.	Weight	Height	Width	Ext. Munsell	Int. Munsell	Core Munsell	Slip/ Paint	Loc. Date	Year Excavated	Typology
H7K11/12/ 21/22/31:09	Poss	7K11/12/ 21/22/31	**	270.4 gm	12.1 cm	7.5 cm	7.5YR 7/4	5YR 6/6	5YR 5/1	Ø	**	**	
H7K11/12/ 21/22/31:10	Poss	7K11/12/ 21/22/31	**	180.8 gm	5.2 cm	3.8 cm	10YR 5/6	7.5YR 6/4	2.5YR 6/1	Ø	**	**	
H7K11/12/ 21/22/31:11	Prob	7K11/12/ 21/22/31	**	346 gm	10.14 cm	10.6 cm	7.5YR 7/4	7.5YR 7/4	7.5YR 6/1	Ø	**	**	
H7K11/12/ 21/22/31:12	Poss	7K11/12/ 21/22/31	**	17 gm	3.77 cm	3.43 cm	5YR 6/4	5YR 7/4	5YR 6/4	ext pnt 5YR 4/6	**	**	

Table 26

Field L Architectural Model Fragments

Reg #	Cert.	Sq.	Loc.	Weight	Height	Width	Ext. Munsell	Int. Munsell	Core Munsell	Slip/ Paint	Loc. Date	Year Excavated	Typology
A040171	Poss	6K78	56	15 gm	3.1 cm	5 cm	7.5YR 6/4	5YR 6/6	7.5YR 5/3	Ø	Hel	2004	
A080198	Poss	6K87	2	32 gm	5.7 cm	4.2 cm	5YR 6/6	7.5YR 7/3	7.5YR 6/1	Ø	Hel	2008	
*B020011	Prob	6K78	14	**	**	**	5YR 7/4	**	**	Ø	Hel	2002	UN/AF

Table 27

## Field M Architectural Model Fragments

Reg #	Cert.	Sq.	Loc.	Weight	Height	Width	Ext. Munsell	Int. Munsell	Core Munsell	Slip/Paint	Loc. Date	Year Excavated	Typology
A080133	Poss	7K23	2	98 gm	4.8 cm	10.8 cm	7.5YR 8/3	7.5YR 8/3	2.5Y 2.5/1	"column" 7.5YR 6/4	Byz	2010	
*A080263	Prob	7K24	2	2.6 gm	10.3 cm	8.2 cm	10YR 8/2	10YR 8/2	10YR 3/1	Ø	Isl	2010	UN/F, I
*A040067	Cert	7K32	69	123 gm	9.7 cm	7.8 cm	5YR 6/4	7.5YR 4/1	10YR 6/1	Ø	LJ2/Per	2004	UN/F
*A080160	Poss	7K33	6	20 gm	4.7 cm	3.2 cm	7.5YR 7/4	7.5YR 7/4	7.5YR 7/4	Ø	Byz	2010	CS(CS)/F, I
A080306	Prob	7K33	6	35 gm	6.1 cm	4 cm	5YR 6/4	5YR 6/4	7.5YR 7/2	Ø	Per	2010	
*A100205	Poss	7K33	14	38 gm	4.54 cm	6.13 cm	5YR 6/4	5YR 6/4	5YR 7/4	Ø	LJ2/Per	2010	UN/AF
A080245	Poss	7K34	2	41 gm	6 cm	3.5 cm	7.5YR 7/3	7.5YR 6/3	5YR 5/4	Ø	Isl	2008	
*A080466	Prob	7K34	8	88 gm	7 cm	6.4 cm	10YR 7/3	10YR 6/3	2.5Y 4/1	Ø	12	2008	UN/I
A080468	Poss	7K34	8	43.2 gm	5.9 cm	5.5 cm	7.5YR 7/4	7.5YR 6/4	7.5YR 4/1	Ø	12	2008	

## CHAPTER 4

### THE LARGE TALL AL-‘UMAYRI MODEL SHRINE

#### Introduction

In 2000 and 2002, a room was excavated in Squares 7K21, 7K22, and 7K31 of Field H, at Tall al-‘Umayri. The room consisted of a large paved area, later identified as a *temenos*,<sup>1</sup> that dated to Strata 10-9, the late Iron Age I (1100-1000 B.C.E.) based on the pottery that was found under the lowest layers of cobble, earth, and plaster surfaces of the Stratum 7 (late Iron Age II) plaster floor (Figure 4.1).



Figure 4.1. The open-air courtyard of Field H. At the upper right hand corner were found the remains of several model shrines including the Large ‘Umayri Model (photo courtesy of Larry Herr).

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, *temenos* is a Greek term used to describe a temple enclosure or court that was considered a sacred precinct. At Tall al-‘Umayri the *temenos* is identified as the sanctuary courtyard.

There were no small finds on the *temenos* cobbled surface itself, but immediately above it was a 10-15 cm layer of thick laminated surfaces consisting of beaten earth and plaster. Several Iron Age body sherds were found on the beaten earth surface in Square 7K21 including many pithos fragments, and several pieces of at least three model shrines that were dated to the late Iron Age I.<sup>2</sup> Figurine fragments and some beads associated with the model shrines were also unearthed. The largest model shrine, Object B000016 (old No. 6852/6853—[Berge 2017: 85], which will be identified as the ‘Umayri Model hereafter), was nearly complete and included rare examples of two anthropomorphic figures facing each other, flanking the entryway. This chapter gives a thorough description of the ‘Umayri Model, followed by an analysis of parallels to the various aspects of the object, including form, iconography, and context, with a concluding discussion on possible meanings and uses.

The first question to address is the categorization of the ‘Umayri Model; as a model shrine, or a cult stand. If we are to utilize DeVries’s typology, the ‘Umayri Model would seem to be a combination of the first two of his six identified types; that of a cylindrical stand, and that of a rectangular or square-shaped stand with one to three stories. However, Michelle Daviau (2008: 301) has suggested that there is another class of architectural models better described as cultic niches or pot shrines. According to Daviau, models falling into this category are usually rounded and have a large opening dominating the front that is often framed by a façade and flanked by pillars and/or figures. The main purpose of these models seems to be to house a deity of some sort. Using the definitions established in Chapter 1, it is clear that the ‘Umayri Model is a

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<sup>2</sup> Excavated in the destruction debris above Cobble Surface 24 (Herr and Clark 2003: 290).



model shrine (Figure 4.2, Table 28) and is thus best defined by the MP AMT Typology, of MS(PM)/P, A, AF.

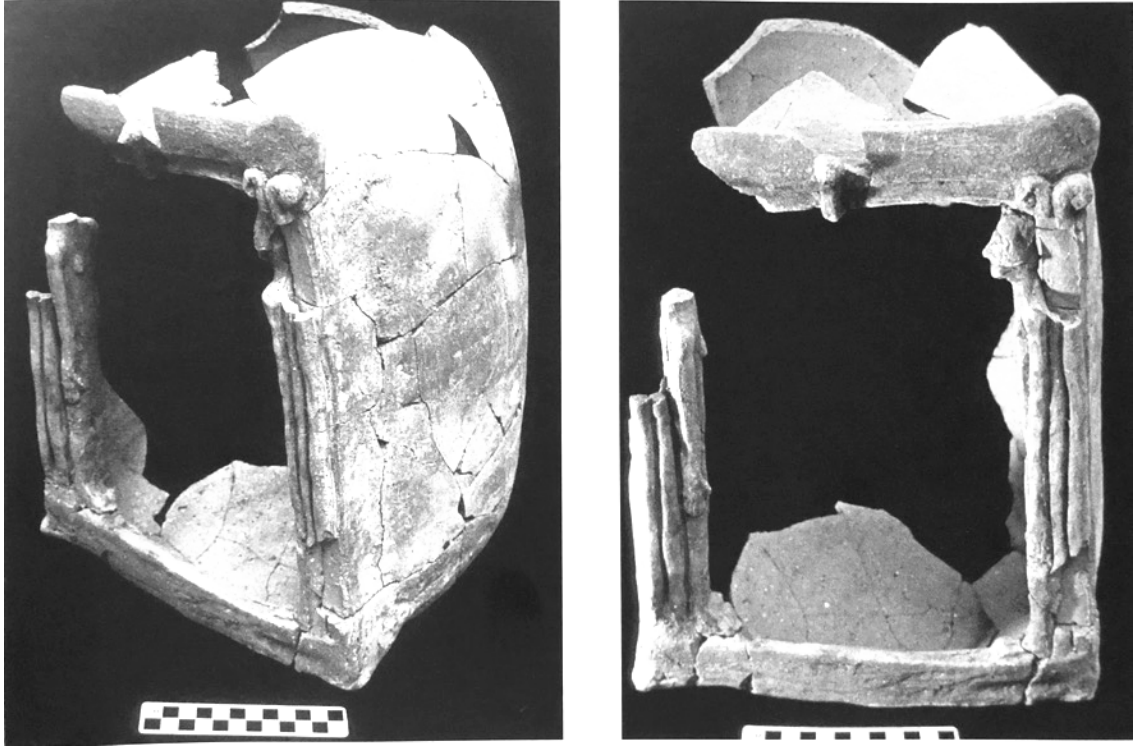


Figure 4.2. Two views of Object B000016, the Large 'Umayyid Model, after partial reconstruction. Currently located in the Madaba Museum (photos courtesy of Douglas Clark).

Table 28

MP AMT for Object B000016; MS(PM)/P, A, AF.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
<b>MS – Model Shrine</b>	<b>PM – Pot Model</b>	F – Fenestration(s)
	SM – Slab Model	<b>P – Paint</b>
	NM – Niche Model	<b>A – Applique</b>
CS – Cult Stand	CS – Cylindrical Stand	I – Incising
	SS – Slab Stand	<b>AF – Attached Figures</b>
UN – Undetermined		

## Description

Object B000016 (Old No. 6852/6853) was found in Locus 22 of Square 7K21, in Field H (Figure 4.3). It is composed of a coarse clay body abounding with calcite grits

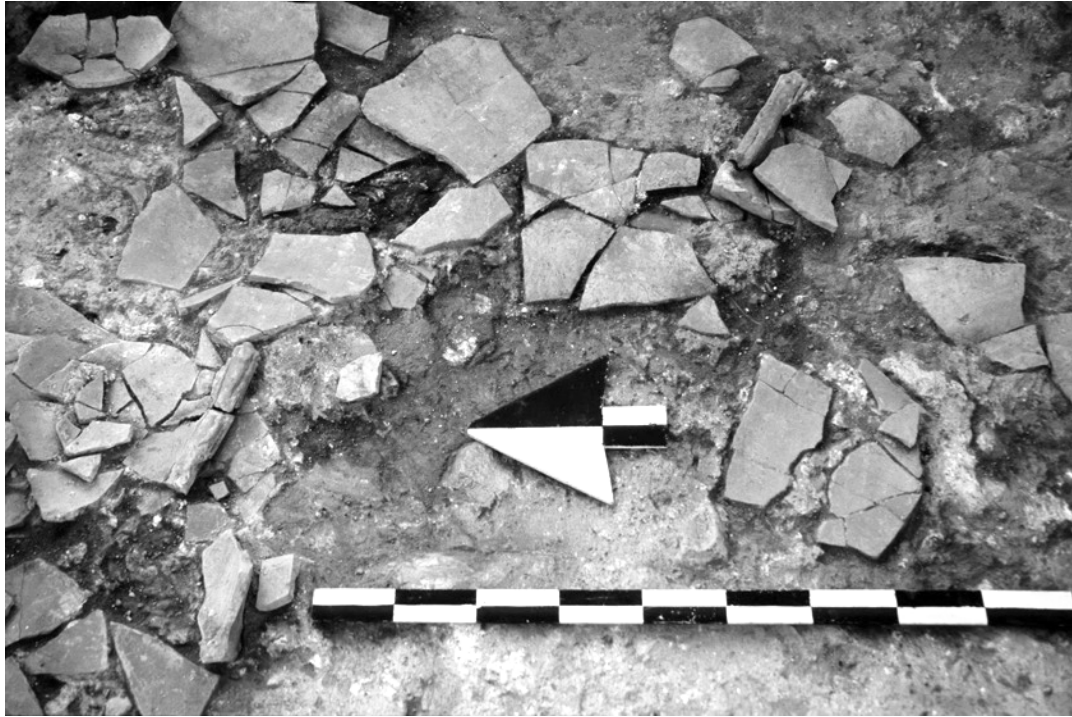


Figure 4.3. The smashed Large 'Umayri Model Shrine in situ (photo courtesy of Larry Herr).

and measures approximately 38 cm in height, and tapers from 30 cm wide at the base to 25 cm wide at the top. The object likely began as a wheel-thrown pot rather than a hand-formed structure. Finger indentations of uniform thickness made while the pot was spinning and being formed can be detected on the uppermost interior of the model. However, the usual striations one would expect to see on a wheel-thrown vessel are absent. This could be due to finger and hand smoothing on the interior that was used to manipulate the sides and shape the pot to its final rectangular form.

Although the top portion of the model is missing, it is evident that it had a beehive or domed shape. Unfortunately, several critical pieces are missing from the top (Figure

57) and it is unclear whether or not the top was finished with a neck and knob or if it was sealed over to form a uniform dome. Reconstruction drawings showing the proposed original shape are presented below (Figure 4.4).

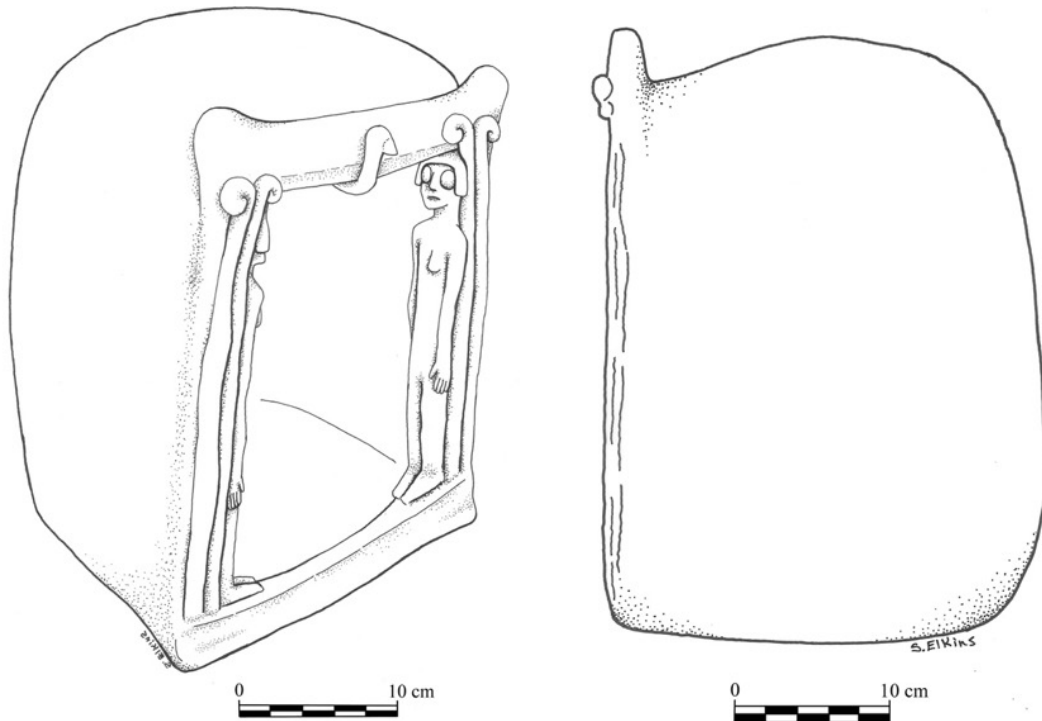


Figure 4.4. Reconstruction drawings of B000016. (drawings by the author).

The Late Bronze Age model shrine from Tell Mumbaqa (Muller 2002: 123, fig. 114) is an example of a wheel thrown pot with a narrow neck and opening at the top. Muller suggests that the intention of the Tell Mumbaqa model was to house a statuette, making it a small tabernacle in the context of domestic worship. She interprets the architectural elements of the domed type of models by comparing them to hives or huts of reeds from northern Syria (Muller 2002: 311). Another example of dome-shaped models can be found in the Late Bronze Age pot shrines from Ras Shamra (Muller 2002: 135, figs. 128 and 29).

The front of the 'Umayri model is dominated by a large rectangular opening. The entryway measures 26.5 cm in height and 18 cm wide. It is framed with long, narrow attachments of clay that surround it, forming a rectangular shape when viewed from the front. At the top of the entryway is a narrow façade measuring approximately 3 cm in height. At each end of the façade are small, rounded projections. Each projection extends upward and outward approximately 1.5 cm.

In the center of the horizontal façade there is an attached vertical coil of clay extending nearly to its top. The clay coil is capped by a ball of clay forming the head of either a bird or a snake. The bottom of the clay coil extends down and inward where it was once attached to the interior of the roof. The attachment is broken at the point of curving inward and back, which left an outline of approximately 5.5 cm showing where the clay coil had originally been joined to the interior of the model.

Two elongated figures flank the entryway of the model shrine for the entire height of the opening, facing each other. The right figure is completely preserved while the left figure is missing its head. The head of the right figure is adorned with what appears to be a helmet that has ear flaps on both sides and tapers upwards into a squared-off cone shape. The face possesses large round applied eyes, a prominent pinched nose, and a mouth indicated by a lozenge-shaped impression. The similarities between the bodies of the two figures allow for the reconstruction of the left figure's missing head, as both seem to be nearly identical.

Each figure appears tall and slim, approximately 26 cm high and approximately 3.5 cm wide. The long arms of the figures are held flat against their sides and end in long fingers. The left figure's hand is well preserved with distinct finger and thumb separation,

while the right figure's hand is not as clearly defined. The legs of both figures are held together without separation and the feet stick out in front, resting on the threshold. The left figure shows a clear distinction of two legs while the right figure's legs are indistinct. Although both figures appear to be male due to the helmet-like adornment on the head of the right figure, each figure also has one small breast located on the side closest to the exterior. Other than the possible helmet, no other clothing or adornment is worn by either figure and no other indication of gender is given.

Facing outwards to the viewer are two columns that form the outer frame of the entrance. Each column was made by two coils of clay placed side by side vertically extending upwards approximately 2 cm above the heads of the figures. Each figure's back is pressed up against a column, seemingly forming part of the column itself. Beginning at the back of the head(s) of the figure(s), each coil has been curled outward forming a capital resembling a palmette or a precursor to the volute (Proto-Ionic or Aeolic) capital commonly found in the Iron Age II (Lemaire 1986: 311). The threshold, on which the feet of the figures rest, consists of a narrow, flattened platform with a groove on the interior.

The exterior of the 'Umayri Model reveals that it was once covered with a dark yellowish red paint or slip, Munsell 5YR 4/6, and while most of it has worn off the back, the remaining traces of paint suggest that the entire model was originally painted red. No other painted decoration is evident.

## Parallels

### Shape

The earliest examples of rounded, ceramic model shrines from the Levant appear in the Middle Bronze Age and continue through the Iron Ages. These cultic objects include the Middle Bronze Age “Silver Calf” model from Ashkelon (Muller 2002: 138, fig.132: a-c), the Bronze Age models from Ras Shamra (Muller 2002: 135, figs. 128-29: a-b) (Figure 4.5), and Mumbaqa (Muller 2002: 123, fig. 114: a-d) (Figure 4.6),

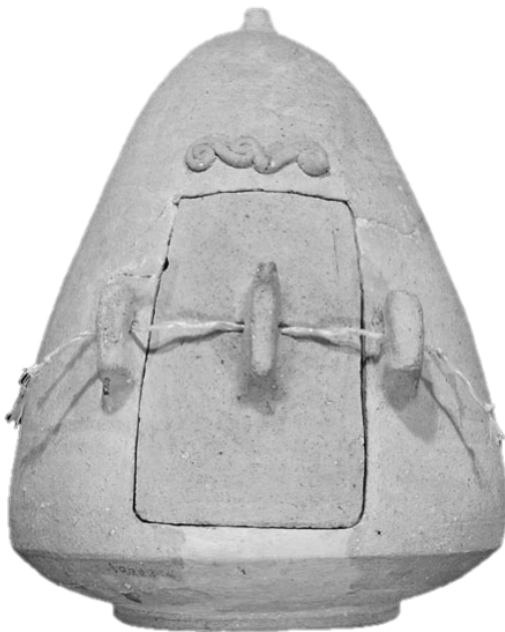


Figure 4.5. Pot shrine from Ras Shamra  
(<http://www.louvre.fr/en>)



Figure 4.6. Pot shrine from Tell Mumbaqa  
(Muller 2002: fig. 114).

the Late Bronze Age models from Kamid el-Loz (Muller 2002: 108-11, fig. 96: a-c, fig. 97: a-d, fig. 98, fig. 99: a-d), Dayr ‘Alla (Muller 2002: 144-45, fig. 139: a, b, fig. 140: a, b, fig. 141: a, b), Hazor (Yadin, *et al.* 1961: pl. CCLXXXII:1), Ugarit (Schaeffer 1949: figs. 79:A-D and 79:1-4), and Tel Kinrot (Berkheij-Dol 2012: figs. 22-24), an Iron Age I model from Tel Rehov (Mazar and Panitz-Cohen 2008: 2, 46), an Iron Age circular niche

from Wadi ath-Thamad (Daviau 2008: fig. 6), Iron Age IA models from Tel Dan (Biran 1994: 152-53, figs. 111 and 112), and Tel Rehov (Mazar and Panitz-Cohen 2007: 210-11), an Iron Age (Stratum IV) model from Tel Hadar (Kochavi 1996: 191), and a previously mentioned Iron Age II model from Transjordan (Muller 2002: 200, fig. 180: a-f) (Figure 3.18). Important equivalents to this type of model shrine come from Crete and date to the Late Minoan period. The similarities include cylindrical vessels with a flat base, conical top, and a single opening (Mersereau 1993: 23-45, figs. 8-35). Other parallels include the urn-like model shrines found at Kition, Cyprus dating to the 11<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. (Smith 2009: figs. 30a-c). Given these examples, it is clear that a long-standing tradition of rounded model shrines that originated as thrown pots existed in the Levant through the Iron Age until slab-formed model shrines gained popularity in Iron Age II.

The “Silver Calf” model shrine unearthed at Ashkelon in 1990 (Figure 2.3) has a similar shape and size to the ‘Umayri Model and appears to look like a wheel-thrown cylinder jar that was finished with a beehive-shaped roof. A door was cut into the front permitting enough space for a metal sculpture of a calf to be placed inside (Stager 1991: 24). While the shape and presence of a single opening of the Ashkelon model is comparable to the ‘Umayri Model, this is where the similarities end. The Ashkelon model is simple, unpainted, and unadorned with a small entryway that shows evidence of a possible clay or wooden doorway attached, as evidence of hinges on the door-jamb is attested (Stager 1991: 27). The Ashkelon model had a knob on the top but there is no clear evidence of what capped the top of the ‘Umayri Model since it was broken. The exterior of the ‘Umayri Model is painted dark red and has a large, embellished entryway

that shows no evidence of a closed door. Although the Ashkelon model dates to the Middle Bronze Age, and is much earlier than the proposed Late Iron Age I date of the 'Umayri Model, its similarities indicate a long-standing tradition of pot-formed model shrines throughout the Levant.

Inside the Ashkelon model was a well-preserved calf figurine made primarily of bronze, which had once been covered with silver. Images of bulls were usually associated with the gods El or Ba'al (Stager 1991: 28). Since there was no accompanying iconography with the model shrine, archaeologists have concluded that the god being represented was a male deity. This would seem to indicate that model shrines, at least in the Middle Bronze Age, were associated with the worship of male as well as female deities. The similarities in the shape, size, and construction of both the 'Umayri Model and the one from Ashkelon, is clear. As the Ashkelon model housed a small figurine, is it possible that the 'Umayri Model may have also housed a figurine? Is it conceivable the interior space was meant to be empty, or was it intended to be the residence for an 'Umayri deity? Although no figurine was discovered in the 'Umayri Model, the dominant entryway and cavernous shape of the model strongly suggests that it was meant to hold something.

Closer to 'Umayri in Jordan is Wadi ath-Thamad Site 13, also known as the Shrine Site. Located near Khirbet al-Mudayna, Wadi ath-Thamad Site 13 has been identified as an Iron Age II cultic site located on top of a natural hill. At the site, several fragments of architectural models were discovered including a rounded architectural model (WT 437-2) (Daviau 2017: 146-47) that appears to have been made out of a singular slab of clay rather than having been thrown on a wheel. Dating to Iron Age II,



this model shrine may have had a flat bottom and is wider than it is tall, giving it a squat appearance (Figure 4.7).

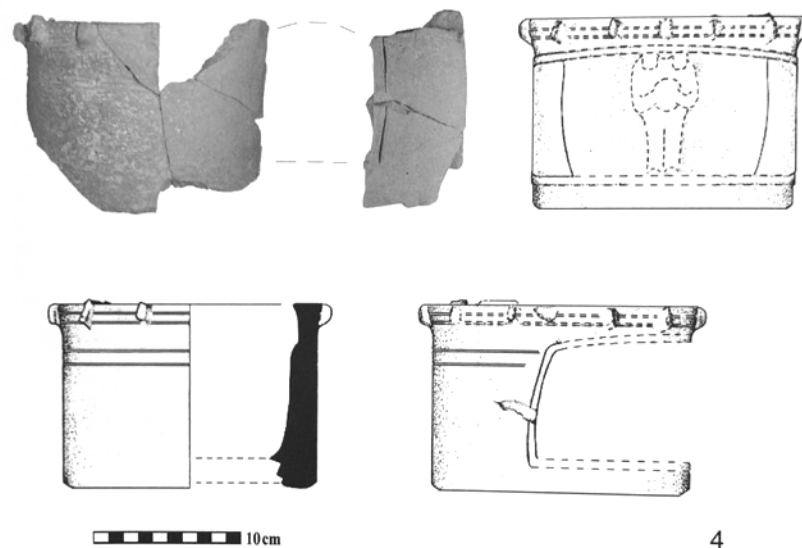


Figure 4.7. Iron Age II round architectural model (WT 437-2) from Wadi ath-Thamad showing the fragments and proposed reconstruction drawings that reveal the possibility of an attached figure on the inside (Daviau 2017: fig. 5.4).

It has a large opening and shows evidence that the interior had a figure attached (Daviau 2008: 299). Both the model from Wadi ath-Thamad Site 13 and the ‘Umayri model have an entrance that was then carved out of the front to create a large opening. The similarities between the Ashkelon model, the Wadi ath-Thamad Site 13 model, and the ‘Umayri Model suggest that rounded pot shrines may have been primarily intended to house a deity. The Ashkelon model demonstrates the earliest known use of these pot shrines for this purpose, while the Wadi ath-Thamad Site 13 model and ‘Umayri Model attest to the continued use of rounded models, particularly pot models, as residences for deities.

## The Façade

The façade of the 'Umayri Model (Figure 4.8) is similar to a pot shrine from Dayr

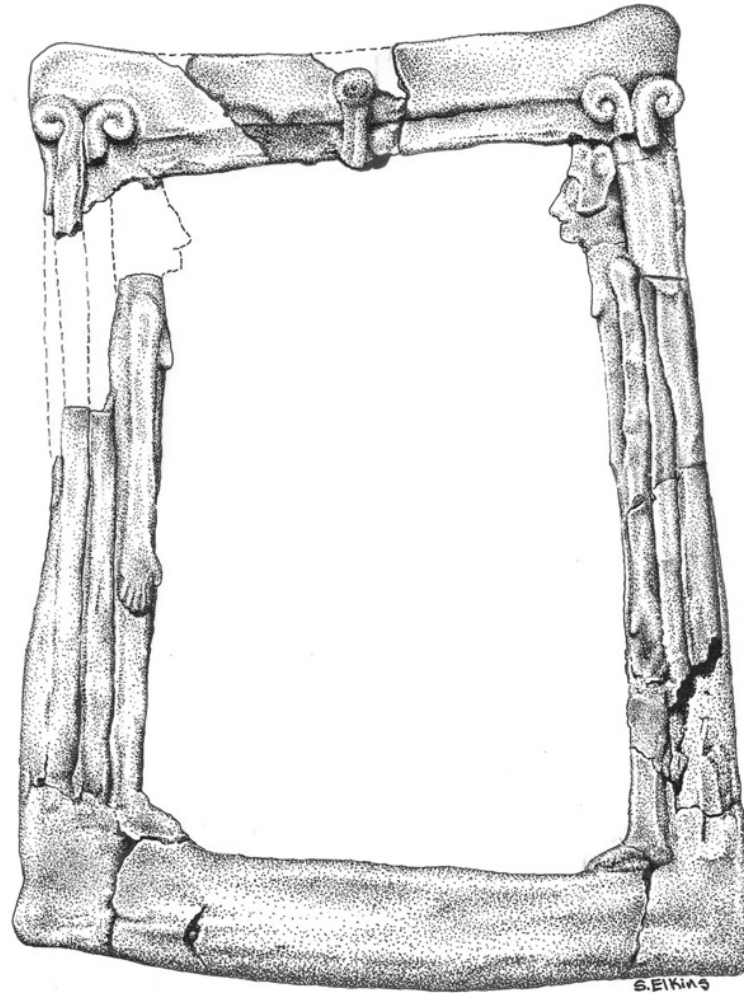


Figure 4.8. B000016, the façade (drawing by the author).

'Alla (Muller 2002: 144, fig.140; Franken 1992: fig. 3-8). Its façade consists of a long rectangular pediment situated over the large opening that dominates the front of the model. Made out of a thick roll of clay, the Dayr 'Alla model also has a narrow, rectangular pediment that terminates on each end with small rounded, upturned knobs

nearly identical to the 'Umayri Model. At the center of the pediment on the Dayr 'Alla model is an attachment that has since broken off (Figure 4.9).

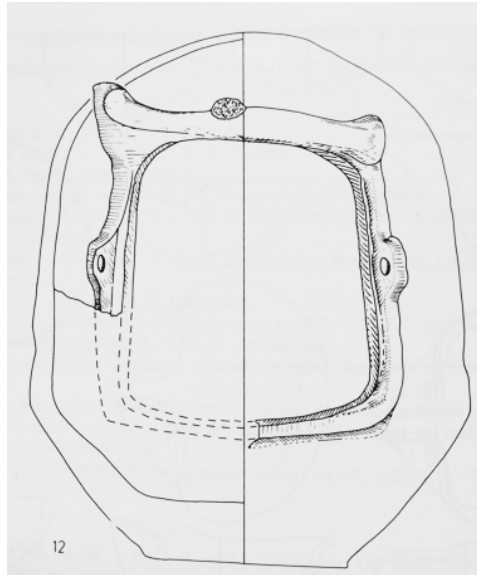


Figure 4.9. Drawing of pot shrine from Dayr 'Alla (Franken 1992: fig. 3-8).

The 'Umayri Model also has an attachment in the center of its pediment. At the center of the pediment, a coil of clay forms a rounded “head” with an outward projection resembling a beak whose tip has broken off. A slight incised line encircles the projection. What was this clay attachment on the 'Umayri Model? Artistic convention would suggest that this could be a bird given the fact that doves were common attachments found at the center of pediments on many model shrines during the Iron Age. A model shrine attributed to Mt. Nebo (Bretschneider 1991: 233-34) and a model shrine attributed to the Transjordanian region in the Collection of the Reuben and Edith Hecht Museum at the University of Haifa, Israel (Bretschneider 1991: 234), have doves attached to the center of the pediment and date to the Iron Age. The Iron Age IIA model shrine discovered at Khirbet Qeiyafa (Figure 3.31) has a similar attachment located in the center of the

pediment, which has also been interpreted as a dove (Garfinkel and Ganor 2012: 50-65). It should also be noted that a small, crude ceramic bird with wings outspread was found in another context at 'Umayri (Herr 2014: 407 [Obj #6131]; fig. 8.14:3) in Field A, Locus 7J79:8, ascribed to Iron Age IIB (Field A Phase 9 [Stratum 8]). Although it was most likely part of the decoration of a model shrine, we cannot assume that it was from this model. But it shows that the site has produced other birds likely associated with a model shrine.

Although most model shrines with attached doves reveal prominent wings, the 'Umayri Model has one significant difference in that the bird-like body appears to have no wings, and shows no evidence of break marks indicating the former presence of wings. Could options other than a dove be possible? Could this be a hybridized version of an Egyptian *uraeus*? The snake-like body lends itself to this theory. Egyptianized artifacts are well attested in Transjordan<sup>3</sup> and versions of the Egyptian *uraeus* are found on the top level of two Phoenician cult stands dating to Iron Age II (Gressmann 1927: fig. 5201; Keel 1997: figs. 221-22). Snake like attachments can also be found on a model shrine from Tel Rekhes, dating to the Iron Age II (Muller 2002: 159, fig. 156). Similarly, a snake can be found encircling the entrance to the Bronze Age model shrine from Mumbaqa (Muller 2002: 123, fig. 114). A scarab attributed to Shechem and dating to the Middle Bronze Age attests to the use of *uraei* in combination with divine female figures and stylized trees (Keel and Uehlinger 1998: fig. 14a). According to Cochell:

The origin and widespread use of various forms of *uraei* in ancient Egypt along with Egypt's close contact with the peoples of the Levant support the argument that the people of the Levant who used the *uraeus* in their own art were familiar with the

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<sup>3</sup> The most prominent Egyptianized artifact found in Jordan, the Balu' Stele, dates to the Late Bronze Age. (Routledge and Routledge 2009: 71-96).

meanings that the Egyptians associated with the *uraeus*. The contexts in which *uraei* appear in Levantine art also suggest that the people of the Levant had meanings in mind similar to those in Egypt when they used the *uraeus* in their art (Cochell 2008: 143).

It would seem therefore, that *uraei* were not uncommon in Canaanite art and consequently it would be feasible that *uraei* would appear on works of art from Transjordan as well. Cochell goes on to add that, “*uraei* with and without wings, in the Levant as in Egypt, belong to the symbol group associated with solar deities” (Cochell 2008: 144). If the ‘Umayri Model has a *uraeus* at the center of its pediment, then it would clearly be of the type without wings.

Another aspect to consider is the overall size of the façade in relation to the shape of the model. The ‘Umayri Model has a rounded shape but when viewed from the front, the pediment extends upwards enough to present a rectangular-shaped front. According to Annie Caubet and Arnaud Prévotat (nd) from the Louvre Museum in Paris, architectural models with developed pediments similar to the model shrine from Tell el- Far‘ah North (Bretschneider 1991: figs. 79a-b), are characteristic of Early Iron Age model shrines from Palestine. Since the ‘Umayri Model has been dated to Late Iron Age I, this hypothesis fits within the stylistic framework of model shrines consisting of a rounded *cella* and having a clearly defined pediment.

### The Two Figures

The depiction of a naked fertility goddess standing in an architectural façade is well known from the Syrian artistic canon dating to the Middle Bronze Age (Frankfort 1939: XL: e). Some scholars have proposed that figures placed at the entrance of model shrines represent the divine goddess summoning her devotees and indicating easy

availability. A thorough analysis of the various meanings of figurines, both freestanding and attached to cult stands and model shrines, is given by Keel and Uehlinger (1998). Dever also discusses this concept of approachability (2005), as well as Zevit (2001: 340), who speaks of model shrines with attached figures being characterized by “openness and inviting approachability.” Ackerman (2012: 552) discusses the theory that figures at the entrance of model shrines may have served as representations of the goddess (Asherah) and functioned as mediators whose purpose was to act as guardians to the entrance of the inner *cella*. Ackerman (2012: 553) states:

The female figures who flank the entryways of model shrines and these shrines’ analogs are supernatural beings. But they are not, contrary to most previous interpreters’ evaluation, the same supernatural beings worshipped within the shrine. Rather, they are guardian figures who are particularly able—because of their liminal nature—to protect the shrine’s divine occupant(s) from the dangers that lurk at its liminally fraught door (Ackerman 2012: 553).

Ackerman’s conclusions indicate that flanking figures on cultic objects were meant to guard the contents of a model shrine. Since the ‘Umayri Model is of a similar shape and size to known model shrines containing figures like the Ashkelon model and the circular model from Wadi ath-Thamad Site 13, and it has the two figures standing on either side of the entrance, it can be inferred that the ‘Umayri Model figures functioned as guardians protecting the viewer or god(s) from one another.

The concept of figures acting as protectors is reinforced if those figures possess both male and female characteristics such as the figures on the ‘Umayri Model. The implication is that these figures signify a “spanning of boundaries,” (Burnett 2008) or an intermediate state of transition made clear by the androgynous nature of the figures.

The helmet or crown adorning the head of the right-hand figure (Figure 4.10) on the ‘Umayri Model resembles military headgear worn by soldiers during the Bronze

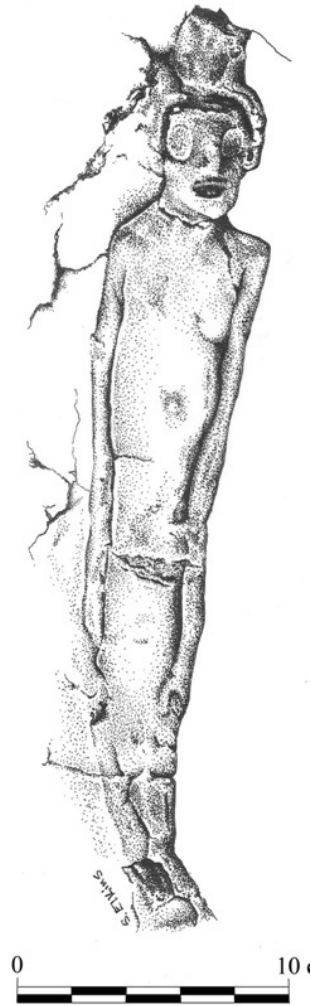


Figure 4.10. B000016. Right-hand figure (drawing by the author).

and Iron Age in the ancient Near East and thus assumes a male identity for the two figures. In most cases rounded or cone-shaped helmets with earflaps were meant to repel arrows and other weapons in battle (Yadin 1963: 15). The right figure on the 'Umayri Model is wearing what appears to be a cone shaped helmet with earflaps. The presence of earflaps would indicate a helmet, as crowns did not typically have earflaps. The left-hand figure is missing its head (Figure 4.11), but it is believed to be a matching figure, thus it can be concluded that the same headgear treatment was given. While the helmet was

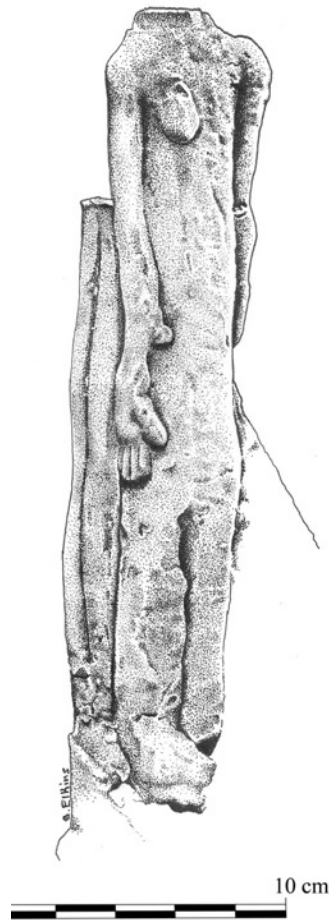


Figure 4.11. B000016. Left-hand figure (drawing by the author).

primarily used for military purposes, its shape could also identify a friend or foe in the midst of a battle, and the shape of the helmet and any accompanying decoration could serve to identify a specific tribal group or tradition (Yadin 1963: 15). This could be the case with the right-hand figure on the 'Umayri Model. Rather than serving to illustrate a military purpose, it could be suggested that the significance could instead function as an identifier for the group or tradition this particular model shrine represented.

Representative examples of headgear can be seen in the Lachish panels from the palace of Sennacherib. The defenders of Lachish are pictured standing on top of a tower-like structure wearing coned helmets with earflaps similar in appearance to the right-hand



figure on the 'Umayri Model (Yadin 1963: 327, 431, 434). While the siege of Lachish is known to have taken place in 701 B.C.E., much later than the Late Iron Age I period currently assigned to the 'Umayri Model, the fact that domed helmets with earflaps were worn by Israelites as well as by Assyrians lends credibility to the idea that the figures on the 'Umayri Model were both wearing a type of helmet common to the region. The 'Umayri Model is a cultic object. Therefore, as stated above, it may be that the helmet worn by the right figure functioned to identify the figure with a particular tribal group or tradition.

The question then becomes, what tribal group or tradition was being identified? Since the depiction of peoples from the Transjordan region is rare in art during the Iron Age, it is difficult if not impossible for the identity of a particular group or concept to be recognized. Due to the common nature of the domed helmet with earflaps however, perhaps the use of a helmet was not intended to identify a particular group, but rather to identify a symbolic purpose for the figures, such as “entryway guardian figures.”

The figures on the 'Umayri Model are facing each other, making this model unusual when compared to figures found on other models, which typically have figures facing outward towards the viewer.<sup>4</sup> Currently there are no other model shrines from the Transjordanian region that have two figures facing each other and this unique feature may reinforce the idea that the two figures were liminal ones associated with a deity. However, hermaphrodite figurines were not uncommon (Figure 4.12). A disk-holding

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<sup>4</sup> See model shrines and cult stands with outward facing figures from Tel Rehov (Mazar and Panitz-Cohen 2008: 43), Yavneh (Kletter, Ziffer, and Zwickel 2010), Megiddo (Zevit 2001: fig. 4.10), Transjordan (Zevit 2001: fig. 4.22), and Pella (Potts and Smith 1992: pl. 71).

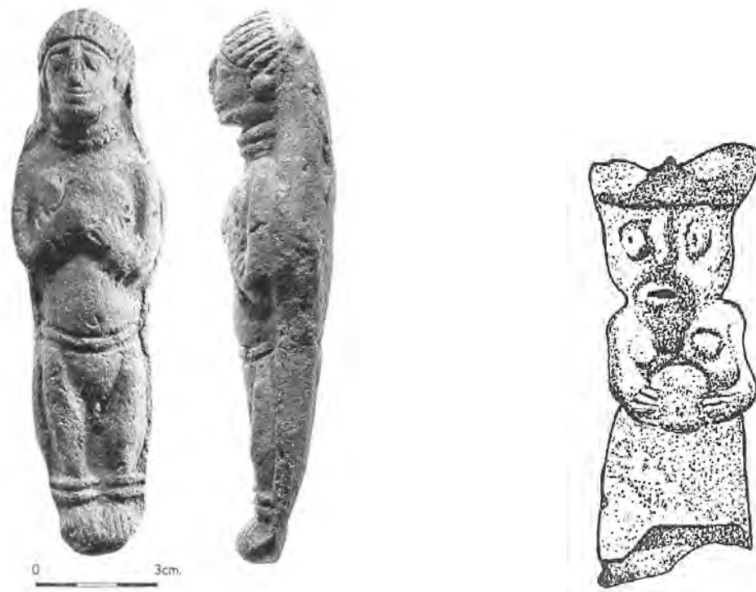


Figure 4.12. Androgynous figurines from Tel 'Ira, and 'Ein Jenin (Sugimoto 2014: fig. 10).

figurine from Tel 'Ira in the Negev displays breasts, a beard, and a penis (Beck 1999: 386-94, Sugimoto 2014: fig. 10.a). A figurine from 'Ein Jenin near Buseirah in Transjordan has both beard and breasts (Homès-Fredericq 1987: fig.3), and finally the Aeolic-capitaled figure from Amman Tomb C (Figure 3.9) reveals a bearded face and swollen belly accompanied by what appear to be breasts (Harding 1951: 37, pl 14). Indeed, it has been suggested that hermaphrodite figures are associated with the “Queen of Heaven” or Astarte in the Levant. In view of the fact that several hermaphrodite figures originate from the Transjordanian region suggests that the Astarte cult may have been popular in those areas (Sugimoto 2014: 163).

The fact that both figures on Object B000016 appear to be naked is also revealing. Typically, a female deity was depicted nude with accompanying attributes such as lions, flowers, palmettes, etc. (Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 201). The 'Umayri Model figures may be naked, but the only possible gender-related attributes are the helmets worn on their

heads, the single breast, and the palmette capped columns they are standing against. Each figure thus possesses both masculine and feminine features. Moreover, the lack of any representation of a pubic triangle or a phallus further suggests an ambiguous gender.

Scholars typically agree that stylized palm trees were associated with a female deity, namely Asherah. Ackermann states, however, that we have to acknowledge that the image of the sacred tree was pervasive in Semitic art and identifying such trees with a particular god or goddess is often difficult (Ackermann 2003: 456). Sometimes this association is very clear, as in the case of the famous 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. Ta'anach cult stand where the stylized tree is guarded by lions and flanked by caprids (Keel 1998: 41). The presence of a female figure between two lions on the bottom-most register adds to the iconographic grouping and can be confidently associated with the goddess. However, Keel (1998: 42-43) argues that by Iron Age IIB (830-700 B.C.E., dates which are later than the Late Iron Age I date of the 'Umayri Model) the connection of the tree with a male figure is less problematic due to the sacred tree being more frequently portrayed without a clear connection to a goddess. It would seem that the 'Umayri model is somewhat too early for this development.

The fact that the columns attached to the two figures from the 'Umayri Model terminate in palmette capitals and appear to be almost a part of the figures themselves, attests to the concept of a feminine deity. Based on the above information, it seems likely therefore that the primary function of the figures on the 'Umayri Model was to guard a goddess within.

## The Columns

The entryway of the 'Umayri Model is flanked by two upright columns. Each column was created with two long clay coils applied vertically at the threshold level of the entrance and extended upwards. Each coil was curled outward at the top, creating a palmette capital. The palm-tree motif is deeply rooted in ancient Near Eastern art.<sup>5</sup> In ancient Syria, the association of palm trees with female deities was established by the Middle Bronze Age. Images of trees appeared with depictions of goddesses, as well as alone, which could infer her presence (Keel 1998: 23). There is a discrepancy concerning the actual appearance of female figures on model shrines vs. stylized tree columns. Some scholars, like Keel (1998: 41), state that the entrances of terracotta model shrines with females begin to appear in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.E. and predate the appearance of flanking stylized palm trees acting as columns, which he says begin to appear in the 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. Contrary to this theory are those scholars such as Amihai Mazar<sup>6</sup> who states that model shrines with flanking figures only appear in the eighth century. However, Mazar is clear that this theory applies only to model shrines from Cisjordan.

It should be noted that flanking tree columns in the Iron Age IIA were often used to take the place of the naked goddess (Keel 1998: 42) as both seemed to be interchangeable due to the life-giving properties each possessed. Keel states however that during the Iron Age I and Iron Age IIA, the relationship of the tree to the goddess became less clear. There was an artistic trend that moved away from anthropomorphic

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<sup>5</sup> For a Mesopotamian viewpoint on the history and evolution of the tree motif, see Mariana Giovino's book, *The Assyrian Sacred Tree* (Giovino 2007).

<sup>6</sup> This theory was debated via email correspondence between Amihai Mazar and Larry Herr. Herr shared the information with the author, to be used with permission.

representations of the goddess, primarily Asherah, which paved the way for the symbol of the sacred tree to be connected to other deities. The fact that the 'Umayri Model dates to late Iron Age I or possibly early Iron Age IIA creates the question of what exactly the palmette columns represented; Asherah, or some other deity.

The early motif of the palmette capital or tree column would eventually become the Proto-Ionic capitals (also called “Proto-Aeolic” or more commonly “volute”) found on architectural decoration as well as in the ornamental arts, like ivory carvings (Barkay 1992: 317). Taking its name from the Ionic order of classical Greek architecture, these capitals usually appeared on buildings and typically possessed outward and downward curling spirals with a pointed center motif.<sup>7</sup> The design of these capitals derived from stylized depictions of palm trees reflecting Phoenician motifs. Iron Age palatial, sanctuary, and temple sites featuring volute capitals in Cisjordan have been found at Samaria, Megiddo (Figure 4.13), Hazor, Jerusalem, and Ramat Rahel. These capitals



Figure 4.13. Iron Age IIA volute column capital fragment from Megiddo (<https://oi.uchicago.edu/>).

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<sup>7</sup> See Barkay’s chapter on the Iron Age II-III in Ben-Tor’s volume, *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel* for a good illustration of palmette capitals (1992: fig. 9.14).

have also appeared as a motif on contemporary ivories (Shiloh 1977: 33-35). The volute capital first appeared on monumental architecture in Israel during the Iron Age II, and over 35 capitals of this type have been identified. Nine or ten are now known from Transjordan (two fragments from Mudaybi could feasibly be from the same capital).<sup>8</sup>

These volute columns have also appeared in miniature. At Tall Jawa, Jordan, in a building yielding a variety of cultic artifacts, a miniature ceramic Proto-Ionic capital (Daviau 2002: fig. 2.43:1), which may have been attached to a comparable column, was found. Correspondingly, an Iron Age column fragment, which may have been topped by a similar capital implies that there may have been a model shrine at that site (Daviau 2002: fig. 2.42:1).

Freestanding palmette capitals have been found on model shrines from Kamid el-Loz (Muller 2002: 107, fig. 95), Haifa (Muller 2002: 200, fig. 179), and Mount Nebo (Muller 2002: 201, fig. 181). Other parallels that more closely match the 'Umayri Model in capital style come from Iron Age II Tell el-Far'ah North (Muller 2002: 146-47, figs. 143-144) (Figure 3.17) where the fluted column terminates at the top not with downward curled spirals, but with upturned swirls of clay. The previously mentioned Iron Age II model shrine from Transjordan (Figure 3.18) (Muller 2002: 200-01, fig. 180) has two sets of curling spirals each; one set turned upwards and the other directly beneath, curled downward. Finally, at Tel Yavneh over 100 cult stands were excavated from a *favissa* on the Temple Hill (Figure 2.5). Many of these stands were festooned with date palms in

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<sup>8</sup> In Transjordan at least five and probably six volute capitals (two fragments could possibly be from the same capital) have been found at Mudaybi in Moab (Bean 2014; see also Drinkard 1997); another has recently been found as part of the lining in a cistern at Karak Castle (Bean 2014); one was, for several years, visible in the wall of a restaurant at Ain Sara, just west of Kerak, but it has been recently removed (Bean 2014); another example, this time in basalt, has recently been found at Balu' (Friedbert Ninow, personal communication); and another fragment is visible at Amman in secondary use (Larry Herr, personal communication). That brings the total for Transjordan to nine (or ten) volute capitals.

various configurations including palmettes on top of columns (Kletter, Ziffer, and Zwickel 2010: 14, 77-80). These variations of palmettes all seem to serve a similar function of flanking an entryway.

There is a long history of two pillars and figures being placed at the entryway of sacred buildings. Early Dynastic Egypt flanked the entrances of sacred precincts with flags that symbolized gods (Keel 1997: 160). Likewise, in Syria, the entrance to a sacred space was sometimes marked by two Asherah-pillars (Keel 1997: 160). Other examples coming from Egypt include the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty Colossi of Memnon, massive seated statues of Amenhotep III, which stood at the entryway of his mortuary temple in Western Thebes (Schultz and Seidel 1998: fig. 77), and the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty colossal seated statues of Ramses II from the Luxor Temple which flank the entrance to the first court (Schultz and Seidel 1998: figs. 64-65). Lastly, are the two columns flanking the entrances of many Iron Age temples in the Phoenician tradition stretching from the Carthage<sup>9</sup> area to Solomon's temple in Jerusalem (where they carried the names of Boaz and Jachin in 1 Kings 7:21). They actually began in the Late Bronze Age, at, for instance, the Area H temples at Hazor (Keel 1997: 154) and are probably what Keel calls "Asherah-pillars" (above, this paragraph). All of the above examples indicate a long and important history and collective memory of two pillars and/or two figures being placed at the entryway of sacred buildings.

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<sup>9</sup> At Punic Kerkouane on the Cap Bon Peninsula in Tunisia, observed by Larry Herr in 1975 (personal communication). They also occur at the Iron Age temples at 'Ain Dara and Tell Tayinat in Syria, to mention just a few.

A model shrine from the Cypriot site of Idalion<sup>10</sup> also sheds light on the possible function of flanking. The pillars on this particular model shrine have been identified as representations of Asherah or Astarte making them symbolic depictions of deities (Keel 1997: 163-65). The conclusion can be made that the pillars on the 'Umayri Model represent something similar; an entrance to a sacred space with the columns perhaps representing a feminine counterpart to the androgynous element of the figures.<sup>11</sup> As the model is missing key parts that might prove vital to a clear understanding of its overall meaning, these inferences can only be offered as interesting possibilities.

### **Archaeological Context**

As has been stated, model shrine and cult stand fragments have been identified from nearly every field at 'Umayri with the largest concentration, with as many as 30 or more fragments, coming from Field H. Excavations in Field H (located at the southwestern corner of the tell) began in 1994 with the preliminary purpose of investigating the southern expansion of the Ammonite administrative complex in Field A, directly to the north. In 1996, a large plaster floor was exposed within parts of three squares (7K21, 7K22, and 7K31), and was dated to the late Iron Age II/early Persian period. Referring back to the introduction, the major architectural feature of this field was identified as an extensive open courtyard used for cultic purposes (Herr 2007: 136). The 2000 season revealed an assemblage of broken pottery on the beaten earth surface located

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<sup>10</sup> The Idalion model shrine dates from the sixth century B.C.E. and reflects both Oriental and Aegean influences. The shrine has been identified as being dedicated to the goddess Astarte (Nicolas nd).

<sup>11</sup> For a more in depth exploration on the identification of freestanding pillars flanking a temple and model shrines, see *The House of Yahweh* (in Keel 1997: 151-63).



on top of a cobble floor in a large room<sup>12</sup> that would later be identified as part of the *temenos*, or open sanctuary courtyard (Berge 2017: fig. 5.20). Pottery forms were used to date the space to late Iron Age I due to the typology of the *pithoi* rims, which were identical to those found in the storeroom of Field A (Herr and Clark 2003: 290).<sup>13</sup>

It was in 2000 that the 'Umayri Model fragments were found on the beaten earth and plaster surface of Square 7K21 in Field H. Another piece of the model was excavated in 2002. Along with the broken pieces of the 'Umayri Model were other objects<sup>14</sup> including at least three additional identified model shrines (Herr and Clark 2003: 290), and pottery, dating to late Iron Age I.

In addition, terracotta fragments were discovered in the 1998 season in Square 7K12 that were identified with at least one or more nearly life-sized statues (or, less likely, masks). Although some reconstruction was possible, there were not enough pieces for any kind of restoration. The fragments (Herr 2014: fig. 8.12: 5-7) included a life-sized chin and mouth with a painted stylized beard, a dramatically painted larger-than-life eye, a slightly smaller than life sized ear, nearly life sized parts of arms or legs and a possible shoulder. The fragments were found in a fill layer dating to the late Iron Age II/Persian period (Phase 4, Stratum 6), and were clumped together in a corner of the large room of

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<sup>12</sup> The broken pottery was found on Surfaces 7K21:26, 7K22:33, and 7K31:24.

<sup>13</sup> A storeroom containing 18 reconstructable collared-rim *pithoi* was excavated during the 1996 season in the Stratum 10 (Phase 10--Iron Age I) layers of Field A in 1996-1998 (Lawlor 2014: 43-58). Located on top of the deep, brick laden destruction of Phase 11 (Stratum 12), these *pithoi* were leaning against one of the two walls of the storeroom. This room was associated by the directors of 'Umayri with a similar storeroom found in the 1984 and 1987 seasons in Field B. The two storerooms, roughly aligned north-south, were dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. and with parallels to the collared-rim *pithoi* found at Sahab (Herr, Geraty, LaBianca, Younker, and Clark 1997: 147-48).

<sup>14</sup> Along with the model shrine and scattered pottery were strewn pieces of one *pithos*, a limestone dish (old registration 6754), a stone bead (old registration 6858), and a small quartz stone (old registration 6748) (Herr, Clark, and Trenchard 2001: 247).

the sanctuary courtyard. It appears that the figure(s) was placed there intentionally. However, it has been proposed that these pieces ended up in the late Iron Age II/Persian period fill due to ancient disturbance and that these statue fragments belonged to the same cult installation associated with the model shrine fragments that was discovered in 2000 and 2002 (Herr, Clark, and Trenchard 2001: 247).

Ash surrounded the small finds from the sanctuary courtyard and was more substantial in the northern part of the courtyard around five boulders (Herr and Clark 2003: 290; fig. 10.1). These large stones may have served as seating or a low platform upon which offerings may have been laid. No bones were discovered anywhere in the courtyard. The preservation of two of the model shrine fragments (Object B90012a/B90012b and Object 6180, discussed in Chapter 3) found near the 'Umayri Model also possessed attached anthropomorphic figures (Clark forthcoming in the object report in *MPP* 8 for B90012; Herr 2014: fig. 8.14:7 for 6180).

While Object B90012a/B90012b displays a partial figure standing upright and covering the pubic area with both hands, there is a lack of breasts and the head showcases a closely cropped hairstyle. Object 6180 only reveals a head attached to the façade of the broken model and has a similar short, Egyptian hairstyle. The identification of these figures is questionable and as mentioned in Chapter 3, it is possible that Objects B90012a/B90012b and 6180 also demonstrate androgynous figures similar to the ones found on the 'Umayri Model.

The sanctuary courtyard of Field H reveals evidence of being at least partially covered due to flat stones that may have served as bases for supports. There was no altar within the space, and this has led to the conclusion that the sanctuary may have

functioned more for the presentation of offerings and gifts than burned offerings (Herr and Clark 2005: 253). The presence of cultic paraphernalia in the area in later phases as well suggests that the sanctuary courtyard continued in use for some time, from as early as the late Iron Age I through the Persian period.

### **Conclusion**

The evidence supports the concept that not only did architectural models have a specific religious function, they were quite common at Tall al-‘Umayri during the late Iron Age I and Iron Age II. Unlike some of the architectural model fragments, the ‘Umayri Model does not show evidence of burning and was not used for incense. Rather, its similarities to other rounded model shrines elsewhere in the Levant attest to the possibility that this object was meant to house a figurine, likely of a goddess. When combined with the addition of a large entryway flanked by figurines, it can be confidently concluded that the ‘Umayri Model is a model shrine that fits within DeVries’ category two (Devries 1987: 28-29). If Daviau’s classification is followed, then the ‘Umayri Model can also be put into the category of pot shrine (Daviau 2008: 301). The MP AMT however, which is being used for this study, places the ‘Umayri Model as MS(PS)/ P, A, AF.

The ‘Umayri Model with its unique features provides a window into the religious practices of late Iron Age I ‘Umayri. The presence of several model shrines within the sanctuary courtyard accompanied by ashy layers and other cultic paraphernalia indicates a center of worship that served the entire community. Androgynous figures on the ‘Umayri Model with the possibility of the figures on Objects B90012a/B90012b and 6180, also probably of mixed gender, indicates that they may have had the function of

guardians to the inner realm of the model shrines. The helmet worn on the head of the right-hand figure of the 'Umayri Model reinforces this idea of guardian as the clear cultic context indicates that the headgear functioned to either identify the people or group involved or, more likely, represented the purpose of the two figures as that of entryway guardians whose role was to protect what was within: either a goddess figure, or an empty sacred space.

The possible presence of a *uraeus* on the façade indicates a possible connection with a solar deity, while the presence of a dove would indicate a female deity, possibly Asherah. The palmette capitals on top of columns reflects the long-standing tradition of tree iconography associated with female deities, primarily that of Asherah. The artistic element of two columns and two figures flanking an entryway has an established history of representing an entrance to a sacred space. If the attachment on top of the pediment of the 'Umayri Model was a dove, the combination of dove, tree symbolism, and standing flanking figures, even though they are ambiguous in gender, would indicate that the deity within was likely female and was possibly the goddess Asherah. By utilizing well-known motifs, albeit in a simplistic manner, the artist established the ability of divine presence to infuse the object, thus accomplishing the purpose it was created for.

The large, nearly life-size statue(s) fragments found near the model shrines in Field H also had an important cultic purpose. Although it cannot be determined with any certainty, this statue(s) seemed to be part of the same sanctuary courtyard dated to the late Iron Age I. Whether it functioned as a principle deity or there were two statues, they may have served as guardians to the main entrance of the sanctuary courtyard. Although no other parallels in Jordan exist like, the placement of guardian figures at the entrance of a

sacred space would be consistent with the long-standing collective memory is a testament of guardian figures at the entrance of model shrines and other temples found throughout the ancient Near East. The cherubim assigned to guard the entrance of the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:24), the *lamasu* guarding the entrances of Assyrian palaces, and the city gate altar showing a window flanked by female divinities (Burnett 2008) from 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. Tel Rehov are just a few examples of flanking figures guarding a sacred space.

All the model shrine fragments from the sanctuary courtyard in Square 7K21 were left *in situ* after destruction. It is uncertain whether or not the models were purposefully destroyed due to discontinued use, or whether they were destroyed due to new occupants. However, the pieces were allowed to remain where they fell or were ritually smashed, left in place, and then covered by additional surface layers as the sanctuary complex continued in use. This act was purposeful and conveys both a sense of respect for cultic objects as well as a healthy fear of removing sacred objects from their initial cultic home.<sup>15</sup>

In conclusion, it is clear that the sanctuary courtyard of Field H was of great significance and had a long history of use, beginning in the late Iron Age I where it seemed to function at its pinnacle, as evidenced by the plethora of cultic artifact fragments. The abundance of these cultic objects, including several identifiable model shrines dating to the late Iron Age I and at least 30 other potential architectural model fragments, all demonstrating variety in style, signifies that the sanctuary complex of Field H served the entire community of 'Umayri. The variety in styles detected in the architectural models indicates a community that had a rich network of artistic influences,

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<sup>15</sup> Based on consultation with Tall al-'Umayri director Douglas Clark.

skill levels, and practices. Regardless of the diverse appearance of the models, it is becoming increasingly clear that they played a large part in the religious practices carried out within and around the sanctuary courtyard of Field H, which seemed to serve as a place to leave gifts, offerings, and prayers to a deity, perhaps Asherah. The Large 'Umayri Model played a part in these rituals and remains as an enduring witness to the collective memory of a people whose voices can only be heard in the whispers of the objects they left behind.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE ARCHITECTURAL MODELS OF

### KHIRBAT ‘ATARUZ

#### **Introduction**

##### ‘Ataruz

The following chapter includes descriptions of six ceramic architectural models from Khirbat ‘Ataruz. This chapter is organized differently than Chapter 3 in that these models are certain in designation and complete enough to analyze each one more thoroughly than the individual fragments from Tall al-‘Umayri. Individual sherds of architectural models are rare at ‘Ataruz; this seems to be because all the pieces of the identified architectural models have been found together where they fell, enabling a designation of “certain” and partial or near complete reconstruction.

After the introduction, a detailed description of each architectural model will be given along with the assigned Madaba Plains Architectural Model Typology (MP AMT). Chapter 6 is reserved for the most complete and largest model in the same way that Chapter 4 was given for the Large Tall al-‘Umayri Model Shrine. All of the known architectural models from Khirbat ‘Ataruz were temporarily loaned to the Institute of Archaeology on the campus of Andrews University for the purpose of this study. Due to the importance of these architectural models and the certainty of their identification, each

architectural model was deemed a good candidate for conservation and are currently undergoing cleaning and restoration. Upon completion, the models will be returned to their permanent home at the Madaba Museum in Madaba, Jordan.

The remains of most of these models can be associated with the Temple Complex in Field A at ‘Ataruz. Therefore, a brief introduction to the site, more specifically, Field A, along with sections entitled Setting the Stage – Moab and the Bible, and The Discovery of the Artifacts, is presented prior to the descriptions of the models as part of the introduction.

### The Site

In 2000, the first season of fieldwork was conducted at Khirbat ‘Ataruz (Figure 5.1), under the direction of Chang-Ho Ji of La Sierra University. ‘Ataruz is an Iron Age



Figure 5.1. Khirbat ‘Ataruz, view from the North (photo by Chang-Ho Ji).



site situated on the ridge of Gebel Hamida between the Wadi Zarqa Ma'an on the north, and the Sel Hedan on the south. Located about 3 km east of Machaerus, the vicinity of 'Ataruz was surveyed in the 1960s by W. Schottruff (Schottruff 1966: 163-208). Field A (Figure 5.2), which is located on the acropolis area, quickly revealed an early Iron Age II

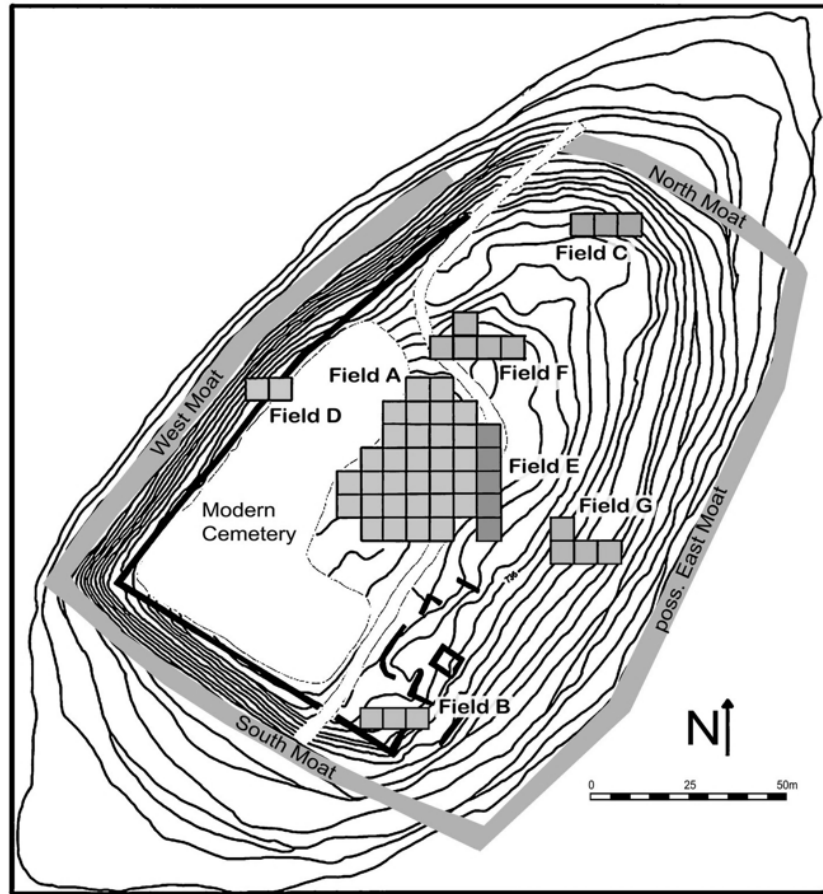


Figure 5.2. Contour map of Khirbet 'Ataruz after the 2016 season (Drawing by Robert Bates).

temple (mid-9<sup>th</sup> century), or Temple Complex as it will hereafter be known, that revealed more than 200 cultic objects housed within what would become known as the Main Sanctuary Room (Ji 2012: 203, 206). It was within the Main Sanctuary Room that several of the architectural models discussed below were located *in situ*. The remaining

architectural models were discovered in other areas of Field A, but still within the Temple Complex.

‘Ataruz is mentioned in the Mesha Stele (Figure 5.3) as the city settled by King Omri of Israel, and defeated by King Mesha in his quest to retake Moab (Dearman 1989: 177-78). Beginning in line ten of the Mesha Stele it states,

Now the Gadites had lived in the land of ‘Atarot forever, and the king of Israel had rebuilt ‘Atarot for himself. But I fought against the city and took it, and I killed the entire population of the city - - a satiation for Kemosh and for Moab. I brought back from there the altar hearth of its DWD and [d]ragged it before Kemosh in Qiryat. I settled in it the Sharonites and the Maharatites (Dearman 1989: 97-98).



Figure 5.3. The Mesha Stele (<http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/mesha-stele>).

The Mesha Stele is the longest Iron Age inscription found to date in the region of Transjordan and has been dated to the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. (around 840 B.C.E.) based on the epigraphy of the script as well as corresponding to known dates of events put forth

in the Book of Kings (Rollston 2010: 54). Based on stratigraphic and pottery analysis, ‘Ataruz Associate Director Robert Bates has suggested that the event which destroyed the early Iron Age II temple at ‘Ataruz could be the Mesha destruction.<sup>1</sup> Amahai Mazar agrees. In a recent article, he strongly suggests that the mid 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. destruction of ‘Ataruz indicates that the temple belonged to the Israelites (Mazar 2015: 30). If this theory is to be considered, the temple ruins and artifacts excavated in the Main Sanctuary Room, including the architectural models discussed here, would be Israelite in origin and not Moabite. As mentioned in the Mesha Stele and discussed in Chapter 2, ‘Ataruz (‘Atarot in the Mesha Stele), was settled by the Israelite tribe of Gad, also mentioned in the Mesha Stele, as suggested by Larry Herr (Herr and Clark 2001).

Another discovery should be mentioned here, however, that offers the possibility that the architectural models in question are Moabite. During excavations, a stone pedestal within the temple complex was discovered that has several lines of inscription from multiple hands. The pedestal inscription was given to renowned epigrapher Christopher Rollston to interpret. Rollston independently concluded that based on the morphology, stance, and ductus<sup>2</sup> of the script, all of the inscriptions date to the 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. (Rollston 2013), which is consistent with the dating of the early Iron Age II date that ‘Ataruz director Ji assigned to the temple complex in Field A. By stating that the language used in the stone pedestal matches the linguistic qualities to that of the Mesha

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<sup>1</sup> Bates’ theory was discussed on November 19, 2015 at the Near Eastern Archaeological Society conference in his presentation entitled, “Recent Discoveries at ‘Ataruz and Their Implications for Understanding Iron Age Cult.”

<sup>2</sup> In linguistics, ductus refers to the attributes of speaking or writing represented in the act of speaking or the movement of writing the text. For example, in writing, ductus comprises the direction and sequencing with which the strokes making up a character are drawn.

Inscription, Rollston's initial conclusions have been that the language is Moabite, which would not be unforeseen considering the location of 'Ataruz is in the heart of Moabite territory. Thus, there still remains the possibility that the sanctuary complex and its mid-9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. destruction could be another incident and that the temple complex was Moabite in origin and not Israelite. Currently, Rollston is working on an article that will discuss in-depth the translation on the pedestal. Depending on what the conclusion is, the pedestal could offer evidence for or against an Israelite presence during the time of the destruction at 'Ataruz.

Regardless of whether or not 'Ataruz was under Israelite or Moabite control, the inscription itself gives us an indicative marker of the time frame as well as confirming the archaeological context for the temple complex of Field A. Who likely ruled the site at the time of the production of the inscription cannot be securely confirmed at this time. However, as the cultic artifacts found within the Main Sanctuary Room were found within the ashy layers of the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. destruction, it seems almost indisputable to assume that all the cultic objects were in use at the time of Mesha's rebellion and subsequent destructive rampage in an attempt to regain the territory he had lost to Israel. Nevertheless, unless the inscription on the pedestal reveals a name or names, there is no way of confirming this. A date shift of even 20 years takes us away from Mesha and puts the temple complex under Moabite control. As has already been established, archaeology cannot easily assess ethnic identity based on artifacts alone. The identity of the people group who created the 'Ataruz architectural models therefore, may never be known for sure.

## Setting the Stage - Moab and the Bible

Due to Moab's reprehensible beginnings as the result of the incestuous relationship between Lot and one of his daughters, as indicated in Genesis 19: 30-36, a rather bad reputation of this land developed. The Bible gives repeated warnings for Israel; Moab is used as an example of what not to be or become, as throughout the Bible the depiction of Moab is regularly one of conflict and negativity. Indeed, the prophecies given in Isaiah 15:1, Jeremiah 48, Ezekiel 25:8-11, and Amos 2:1-3 seem to rejoice in the foretold destruction of Moab. However, in contrast to the scorn offered in describing the region as a whole, there are hopeful stories. Ruth, a Moabitess, captures all the qualities of a good and faithful woman who ends up playing an essential role in Israel's lineage that is capped with the birth of King David.<sup>3</sup> Thus Ruth, a Moabite woman, ironically becomes an admirable example of what it means to be a good Israelite woman (Routledge 2001).

In another ironic twist, the Bible goes on in Amos 2:4, to declare that Judah is subject to the same condemnation that is stated will befall Moab. These conflicting statements work together to generate a serious gravity about the warnings given to Israel that they not plunge into the depraved practices of Moab. The warnings given to Israel about Moab are severe because they are neighbors; they live in close proximity to each other and, as a result, share a common material culture (Routledge 2001).

The importance of sharing the above information becomes apparent when questions are asked about the archaeological research in the land of Moab during the Iron

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<sup>3</sup> Ruth's family line can be read in Ruth 4: 18-22.

Ages when Israel was an emerging nation. According to Routledge, the Biblical portrayal of Moab could be responsible for impeding research, or at least, swaying our biases.

The similarities revealed in material culture make it difficult if not impossible when identifying the people with whom artifacts can be attributed to. Archaeological evidence has attested to the fact that Moabites and Israelites spoke mutually understandable languages, used a similar paleo-Hebraic script, and shared a common lifestyle including similar religious practices. Archaeologically this can produce a conundrum. The fact that both groups coexisted within the same time frame causes much debate and even angst when determining ethnic identity among people groups (Routledge 2001).<sup>4</sup>

In other words, the common culture shared between Moab and Israel was so similar that it could easily cause Israel to fall spiritually. Routledge goes on to say that the fact that the Bible mentions Moab so often should alert us to the difficulty in understanding the differences in material culture when it comes to Moab and Israel (Routledge 2001). Bernhard Lang stated as much by saying that,

“...there was a dominant, polytheistic religion that was indistinguishable from that of neighboring peoples. Insofar as there were differences between the Ammonite, Moabite, Edomite, Tyrian, etc. versions of religion, these beliefs stayed within the framework of Near Eastern polytheism, and each should be interpreted as a local variant of the same basic pattern” (Lang 1981: 53).

Lang also states that the Israelites, while worshiping Yahweh, also worshiped other gods who performed special functions having to do with weather, success in battle, or women’s fertility (Lang 1983: 20). As discussed in Chapter 2, woman may have played a significant part in the folk religion of the people in these smaller city-states of the Levant. The worship of Asherah alongside Yahweh has been acknowledged by many scholars and is attested by the Hebrew inscriptions found at Kuntillet ‘Ajrúd where Yahweh is mentioned alongside El, Ba’al, and Asherah (Dever 2005: 162-63).

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<sup>4</sup> This quote was taken from a BAS presentation given in 2001 entitled, “What We Don’t Know About the Biblical Moab.” Permission was given to the author by Routledge via personal correspondence to utilize the data put forth in his presentation.

In the case of 'Ataruz, these identifications could have profound ramifications not only archaeologically, but politically as well. If the destruction of the first phase of the Sanctuary Complex of 'Ataruz, which has been dated to the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., is the destruction of Mesha who so eloquently speaks of it in the Mesha Stele, then it could be that the artifacts found in the destruction layers belong to the Israelite tribe of Gad.

Iconographically, this is important as the iconographical imagery on the architectural models could therefore be rare examples of Israelite art. However as previously mentioned, if the dating given to the 'Ataruz destruction is off by as little as 20 years, then we may be looking at Moabite artifacts. Even though a similar style of art would be expected, differences would have been made in order to attribute a specific religious meaning to be associated with certain iconographic detail. To us, these subtle differences are often lost and difficult to ascertain, but to the local people at the time, they may have been apparent enough to identify Israelites and Moabites as different and distinct. The subtle style differences resulting from the collective memory of the artisans made possible by the unification of common motifs found in the Levant during the Iron Age might be impossible for us to differentiate. Routledge best sums the issues with the two only known documents currently available to scholars at this time:

In 2 Kings chapter 3, we read of Mesha who is a sheep herding vassal of the northern kingdom of Israel who rebels after the death of Ahab. Even though the account describes Moab in typical degrading fashion along with the horrors of child sacrifice and defeat, the Mesha Stele paints a different one where Mesha flouts his success in revolting against Israel by attaining victory over cities in Northern Moab that were controlled by the Israelites. A great deal of debating has thus ensued over correlation of biblical accounts and that of the Mesha Stele due to conflicting numbers concerning dates of reigns. It is clear that both documents will never be able to provide exact dates that can be agreed upon, therefore it is up to archaeology to fill in the holes and hopefully come up with a feasible solution to the endless discourse over exactly when Mesha, Omri, and the like conducted their military campaigns in Moab. Due to the nature of royal inscriptions such as the Mesha Stele and the theological

purposes of the Bible, we can naturally expect the two documents to conflict with one another as each had its own agenda directed to specific audiences (Routledge 2001).

The question of neutrality in the wake of scientific discovery becomes apparent.

Two documents, the Mesha Inscription and the Biblical account, talk of the same events and place and thus create for the archaeologist the question of whether or not these documents help or hinder us. Who do we believe? Are all of these architectural models that date to Iron Age IIA Israelite, or Moabite? The map below illustrates the many kingdoms and cultures in close proximity to one another (Figure 5.4). Are there any



Figure 5.4. Map of the Levant showing the Kingdom of Moab. Khirbet ‘Ataruz is located just to the upper left of Dibon.  
([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kingdoms\\_around\\_Israel\\_830\\_map.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kingdoms_around_Israel_830_map.svg))



subtle stylistic differences that Marian Feldman calls “stylistic minutiae” (Feldman 2014: 44) that can be detected to lend authority to one culture over another? There may be.

### Discovery of the Artifacts

The size of the Main Sanctuary Room from Field A (Figure 5.5) measures around

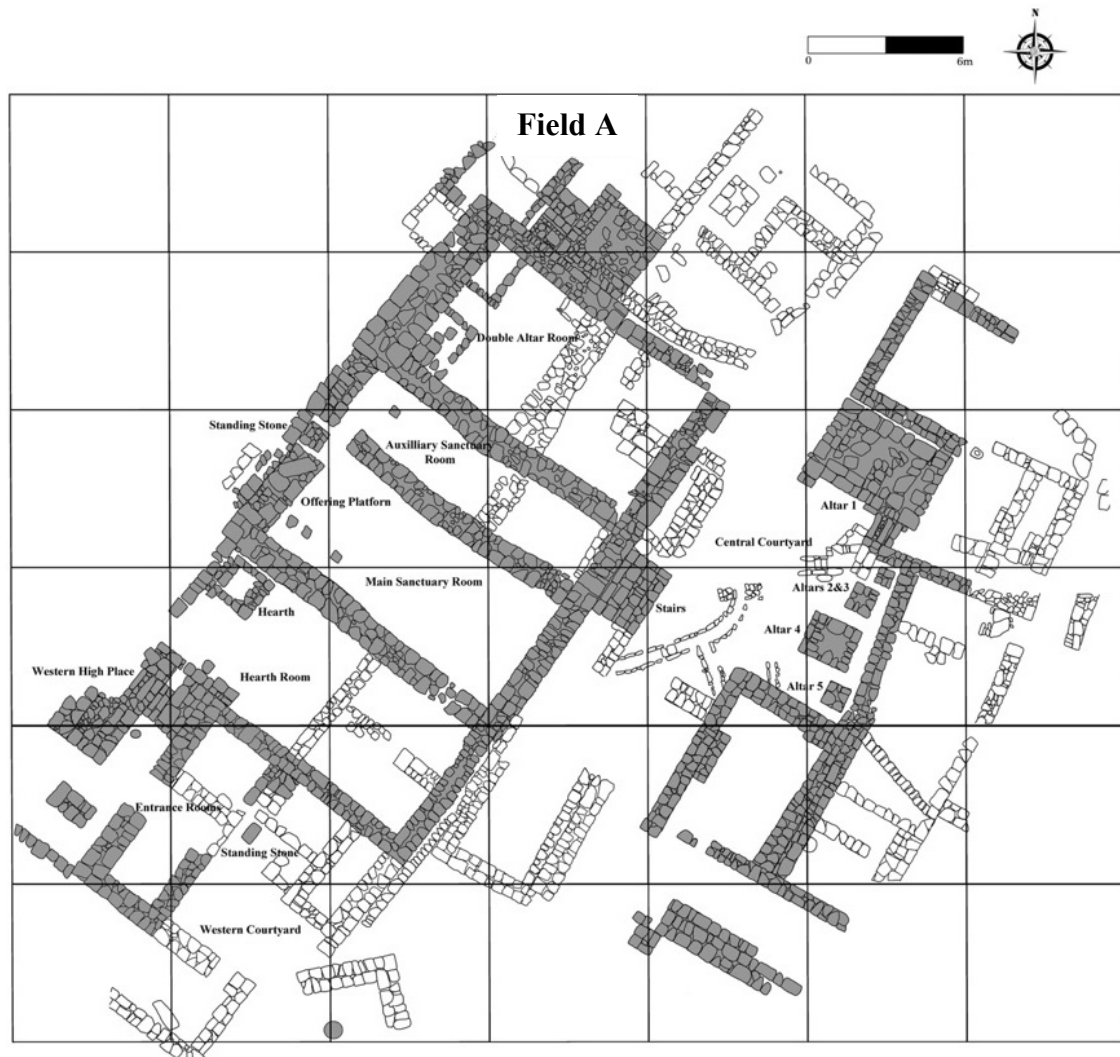


Figure 5.5. This diagram shows a map of the Field A including the Main Sanctuary Room. Artifacts were found on the stone dais as well as on the three-tiered stone platform. Pieces of the Large ‘Ataruz Cult Stand (see Chapter 6) were also found near the dais on the floor where it presumably fell during the proposed Mesha destruction. The remaining objects were found at various locations around Field A including the Central Courtyard area. The gray areas indicate the Iron IIA buildings. (Drawing by Robert Bates).

12 m in length and about 5 m in width and is divided into two phases. The director of the excavations, Chang-Ho Ji, dates the first phase, which he calls the Temple Phase I, to the late Iron Age I and early Iron Age IIA (Ji 2012: 204-05). Ji's date is consistent with the dating system put forth by Amahi Mazar (Mazar 2005: 15-30). According to Mazar, the Iron Age IIA falls between 1000/980 and 840/830 B.C.E, putting the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. date at the end of Iron Age IIA. Thus, the Temple I Phase of Field A would correspond to the historical reigns of David and Solomon (Younker 2017: 366-367) and the beginning of the divided monarchy.<sup>5</sup>

The second phase of the Temple Complex in Field A has been dated to the early to mid-Iron Age IIA, which Ji calls Temple Phase II (Ji 2012: 206). Ji states that the combination of architecture along with ceramic evidence, dates the Temple Complex to the late 10<sup>th</sup> to mid-9<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.E. (Ji 2012: 204).<sup>6</sup> The Main Sanctuary Room of the Temple Complex, begun in the Temple Phase I, was expanded in Temple Phase II and continued to be used throughout the second phase. The dating is important here due to the correspondence of the destruction of the temple possibly dating to the time of the Mesha Stele, which has been previously stated as dating to around 840 B.C.E., or the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.

The cultic installations within the Main Sanctuary Room and objects found *in situ* seem to have remained in place throughout the duration of the room's use, indicating a long life and consequent respect for objects dedicated to worship and cult. Whether or not

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<sup>5</sup> Mazar's chronology has been describes as the Modified Conventional Chronology (MCC) and is used here as the MCC is more fitting to the archaeological and textual data found in Jordan (Frese and Levy 2010; Mazar 2005; Younker 2017).

<sup>6</sup> See *ADAJ*, vol. 58, for examples of selected Iron II pottery from the 'Ataruz Temple Phase II (Ji and Bates: 2017: pl. 5b).

the architectural models were placed within the room near the beginning of its use or near the end, cannot be determined. However, the fact that all the cultic objects within this Main Sanctuary Room remained *in situ* even after the destruction of ‘Ataruz in the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., signifies a tradition of leaving cultic remains in place even after the destruction of a site.

Similarly, at Tall al-‘Umayri, remains of the model shrines found in the open-air sanctuary complex of Field H were apparently left where broken and new floors added on top of the remains. Douglas Clark, senior director of the ‘Umayri excavations, proposes that this could be due to respect of cultic objects in general in spite of the destruction of the place of their housing. Once they had fulfilled their usefulness they may have been purposely smashed and covered over much like a depositary or *favissa* where cultic remains are often disposed.<sup>7</sup> No such *favissa* has been excavated, as of yet, at either ‘Umayri or ‘Ataruz, but the practice of honoring sacred objects after their usefulness was deemed over, or perhaps prayers had been answered, is apparent. This indicates a strong belief in the magical power these objects carried with them when they were initiated into use, a power that was respected even if they were destroyed.

At ‘Ataruz, in the northwest corner of the Main Sanctuary Room, there is a raised three-step platform (Figure 5.6) on which many of the votive and cultic objects were found. The platform was built along the rear wall of the room and was made up of small to medium unworked stones topped by smoother flat-topped stones. To the right of the platform was a recess niche measuring 1.5 x 1.5 m in which a stone dais about 1.3 m high

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<sup>7</sup> This theory was discussed via personal communication with Tall al-‘Umayri senior director Douglas Clark at the November, 2015 ASOR annual meetings in Atlanta, GA.

with a base of 1 x 1 m square was built on top of a beaten earth floor. A standing stone measuring 0.5 x 0.5 x 1.5 m, was found on top of the dais. This standing stone could represent a yet to be identified god to which the cultic objects, including the model shrines and cult stand being discussed here, were dedicated.<sup>8</sup>



Figure 5.6. The Main Sanctuary Room of Field A looking west. The raised three-step platform and standing stone are at the far end of the room opposite the entrance (photo by the author).

Ji has this to say about the first phase of occupation:

Four stone bases belonging to Temple Phase I were located inside the sanctuary room along the northeastern and southwestern walls, which seem to have been used to support the roof. Yet, such installations were absent in the middle and southeastern sections of the main sanctuary chamber. This perhaps suggests that only part of the northwestern section of the room was roofed, while the other remained uncovered. This being the case, the sanctuary chamber appears to have been a partially open-air building consisting of a roofed and canopied section on the northwest side and a courtyard-like open space on the southeast side (Ji 2012: 204).

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<sup>8</sup> For an in depth look at standing stones or *massebot* in relation to the Hebrew bible and YHWH, see Bloch-Smith's article (2015: 99-116).

The sanctuary complex of Field H located at Tall al-‘Umayrihas been identified as an open-air courtyard sanctuary as well, and it was within the late Iron Age I layers that the remains of at least four model shrines were found (Herr and Clark 2005: 253-55). This association of model shrines and cult stands with religious buildings is becoming demonstrated more and more in Transjordan as well as in the greater Levant. For example, a two-story model shrine from Site WT-13 (WT 9-1/509) was found at the nearby wayside shrine in the Wadi ath-Thamad (Daviau 2008: 307, fig. 3) (Figure 5.7).

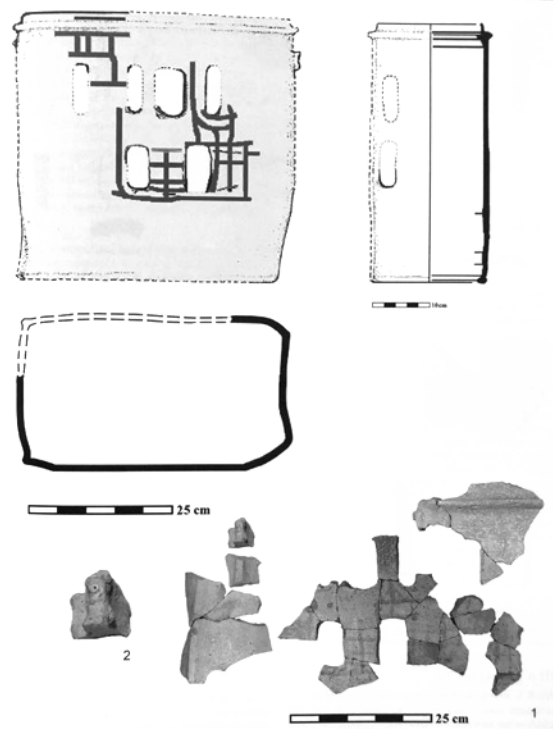


Figure 5.7. Fenestrated cult stand from Wadi ath-Thamad WT-13 (Daviau 2017: 145, fig. 5.3).

It is within the sanctuary complex of Field A at ‘Ataruz that at least seven known architectural models were found. What follows is a detailed description of six of these models. Due to the lack of access to locus sheets, there is no accompanying comprehensive table at the end of the chapter similar to the tables at the end of Chapter 3.

Another reason for the lack of a comprehensive table is that each of these architectural models is in a reconstructable state and certain in designation, thus the descriptions are longer and more detailed. There are no individual fragments described here. The following diagram (Figure 5.8) illustrates the southern portion of the Main Sanctuary Room in Field A along with the location of several of the architectural models that will be described in detail in the following section.

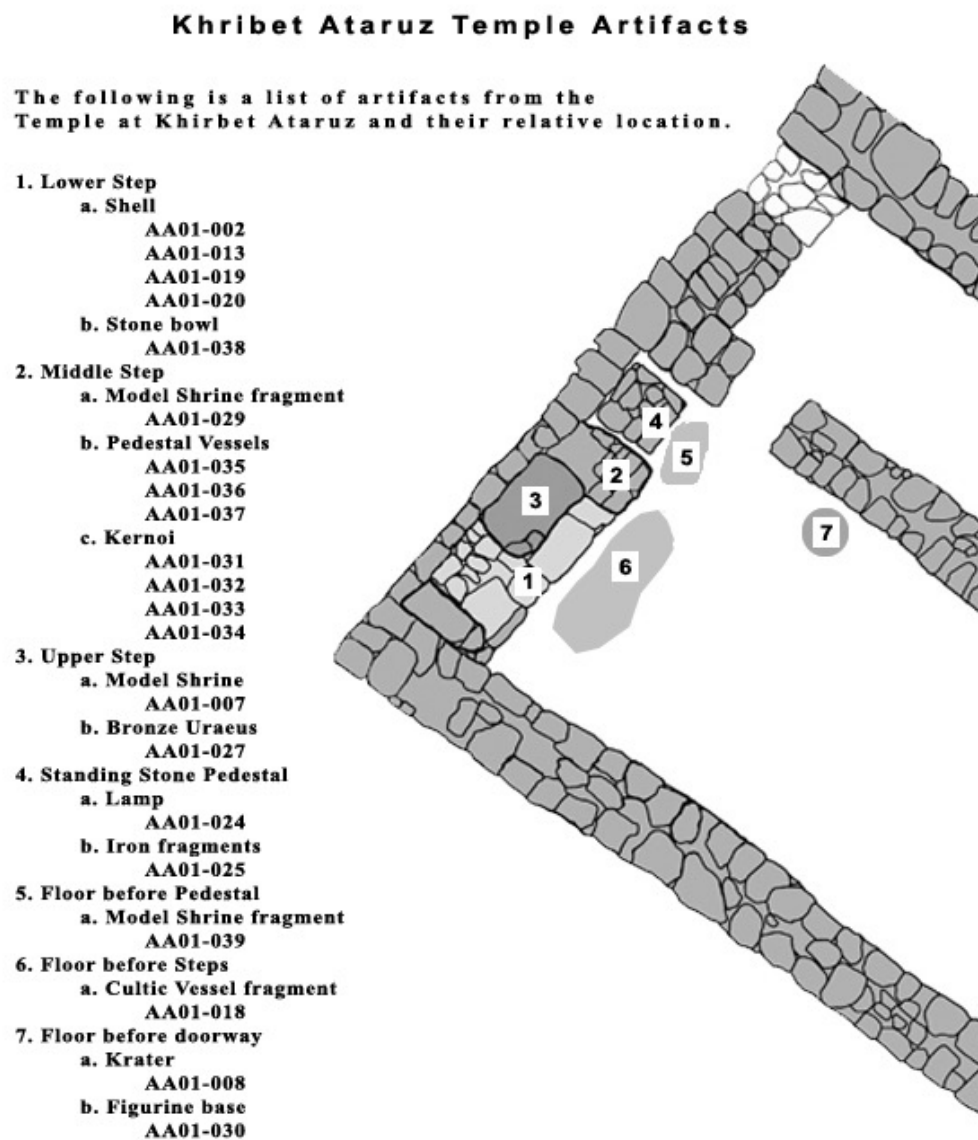


Figure 5.8. This diagram shows the location of several of the architectural models as well as other cultic artifacts from the Main Sanctuary Room located in Field A (Diagram by Robert Bates).

## Architectural Model and Fragment Descriptions

Registration: AA10-126: The Thick Architectural Model

Object AA10-126 (Figure 5.9) consists of six thick fragments all belonging to what is certain to be an architectural model, but too much is missing to ascertain as to whether or not the pieces belong to a model shrine or a cult stand, therefore an MP AMT of UN/N (Table 29) has been assigned. The coarse clay body shows evidence of lots of



Figure 5.9. The six fragments of Object AA10-126 (photo by the author).

Table 29

MP AMT for Object AA10-126; US/N.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
MS – Model Shrine	PM – Pot Model	F – Fenestration(s)
	SM – Slab Model	P – Paint
	NS – Niche Model	A – Applique
CS – Cult Stand	CS – Cylindrical Stand	I – Incising
	SS – Slab Stand	AF – Attached Figures
<b>UN – Undetermined</b>		<b>N – None</b>

temper, including bits of straw, calcite, and basalt. The core is very dark, indicating a low fire. Each piece is heavy due to its thickness and density, with an overall average thickness ranging from 2.4 cm to 5.3 cm. While only two of the fragments fit together, it is clear that this object was of a slab construction. The front right hand side is preserved enough at the bottom to reveal that there was no distinguishable floor making it consistent with cult stands, which typically had an open bottom.

The main opening appears to have taken up the entire front of the object however, which is more consistent with model shrines. Interior finger marks are evident while the exterior appears to have been hand-smoothed. No evidence of paint, incising, or other ornamentation can be detected. However, on the interior of the front fragment, there is a wad of clay (Figure 5.10) that was applied to the interior edge by the opening. It could be that this is all that is left of added clay that was used to support and attach a figure. This is pure speculation, but it must be considered due to the prevalence of model shrines having attached figures flanking the entrance.



Figure 5.10. Frontal and side view of a corner fragment from Object AA10-126 showing the small clay protrusion where a figure of some sort may have once been attached (photo by the author).



It is impossible to calculate the size of this model, but due to the thickness of the slab fragments, it is likely that it was a larger one as the size of the slabs indicate the thickness needed to support a large object.

Found in a rectangular room adjacent to the Central Courtyard of Field A (A25.17), these architectural model fragments were scattered about 1.5 m southwest of the area where a ceramic statue of a bull (Ji 2012: taf. 46) was found and is connected stratigraphically to the bull (Final Temple Phase, early to mid-Iron Age IIA), and also to a cylindrical cult stand (AA10-100), which is not discussed in this chapter. It cannot be determined if Object AA10-126 was a model shrine or cult stand at this point as it seems to have characteristics of both but it can be confirmed that it was indeed a slab construction. As it is difficult to verify what type of architectural model this object is, no parallels are offered here. The object can only attest to the use of architectural models within the Sanctuary Complex during Iron Age IIA.

Registration: 605/607:

#### The Dual Lions and Female Figurines Model Shrine

This object consists of 19 fragments (Figure 5.11). The clay used for this architectural model appears to be medium to well-levigated with a darker core. There is a lot of temper made up of fine to medium grits of calcite and basalt, with evidence of straw. Even though only a few of the fragments can be reconstructed, it is clear that this was a model shrine and has been assigned an MP AMT of MS(SM)/P, A, AF (Table 30). The preserved fragments reveal a slab constructed box with 90-degree corners, a roof, and a floor. The lower left-hand side is preserved enough to reveal what may have been a

fluted column going up the exterior left hand edge of the opening. The column base rests on a slightly projecting platform that has a groove in the middle which would have



Figure 5.11. Fragments of Object 605/607 (photo by the author).

Table 30

MP AMT for Object 605/607; MS(SM)/P, A, AF.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
<b>MS – Model Shrine</b>	PM – Pot Model	F – Fenestration(s)
	<b>SM – Slab Model</b>	<b>P – Paint</b>
	NS – Niche Shrine	<b>A – Applique</b>
CS – Cult Stand	CS – Cylindrical Stand	I – Incising
	SS – Slab Stand	<b>AF – Attached Figures</b>
UN – Undetermined		N - None

continued all along the vertical ledge. Next to the column and sitting on the ledge are the badly eroded remains of what appears to be a crouching lion (Figure 5.12). The lion is facing outwards with paws extended. The face is so weathered that it is impossible to tell if the mouth was open or not as seen in other examples of model shrines and cult stands.



Figure 5.12. Lower left side of Object 605/607 showing the weathered lion base. The left-hand photo shows one of the figurine fragments where it might possibly have originally been located, atop the crouching lion (photos by the author).

Examples include the famous Ta'anach Cult Stand (Glock 1997: 149) (Figure 2.1), where flanking lions are seen on the lower and third levels, a lion fragment from a model shrine found at Tall al-'Umayri(A90304c) (Figure 3.30), a well preserved cult stand from Tell Yavneh (Kletter, Ziffer and Zwickel 2010: pls. 50, 51, 52) (Figure 3.32) showing flanking lions with protruding tongues, the recently discovered model shrine from Khirbet Qeiyafa (Figure 3.31) showing two crouching lions flanking the entrance (Garfinkel and Ganor 2012: 50-65), and a model shrine attributed to the Transjordanian region which is currently in a private collection (Maier and Dayagi-Medels 2007: fig. 2) (Figure 3.22).

The right side of the lion is more defined as it recedes into the interior, revealing that it is in a crouched position. The top part of the head of the lion has been broken off and it is evident that something was sitting, standing, or attached to the top of the lion. A large clump of clay sits atop the back of the lion and is likely the base of a standing

figurine. The likely candidate is one of the two figurines that belong to the model. Both figurines are preserved only from the waist down to the lower parts of the legs. The V-shaped pubic triangle is clearly enhanced, indicating that these figures were female, although there is also a chance they could be androgynous like the examples from Tall al-‘Umayri Model Shrine (Objects B90012a/B90012b, 6180, and B000016, see Chapter 4). The largest of the figurine fragments is preserved to a height of 7.9 cm with the width of the legs at the hips being 2.6 cm. The smaller of the figurines has a preserved height of 6.8 cm with width of legs at the hips as 2.5 cm. The hip width tells us that these two figurines were likely of similar size and appearance. They also appear to have been made from a mold, but if they were made from the same mold, they were manipulated while wet, possibly during the attachment process that then resulted in the slightly differing width measurements.

Female figurines standing on top of or beside lions was not an uncommon iconographical motif, and lions as well as female figurines are a common element of both model shrines and cult stands as seen on some of the fragments from Tall al-‘Umayri (Object 1344, and Objects A90304a and A90304c). However, while common in ancient Egypt (Keel and Uehlinger 1998: fig.4), as well as in Mesopotamia (Figures 2.8 and 2.9), goddesses standing on top of lions were rare in the Levant, although it does occur at times. A figure can be seen standing on top of a lion protome from Tell Yavneh (Kletter, Ziffer and Zwickel 2010: pls. 69 and 70). Other examples include a bronze pendant from Acre (Keel and Uehlinger 1998: fig. 70), and two terracotta tablets from Tel Harashim (Giveon 1991: 76, fig. 110). Only one example of female figures standing on top of lions

appears in Transjordan however. At Pella, a cult stand (Figure 5.13) dating to Iron Age I/Iron Age IIA shows two mold-made female figures standing on feline heads that were

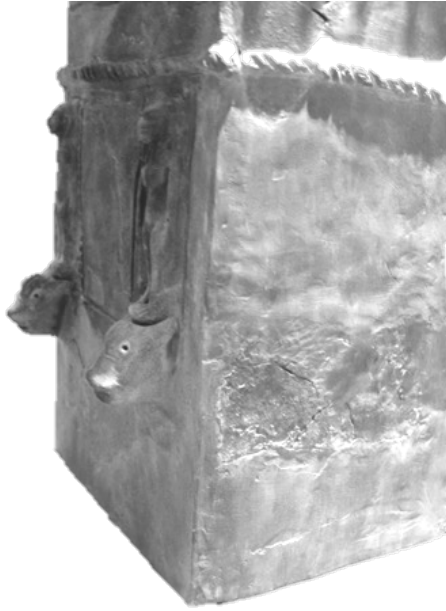


Figure 5.13. A close up of a cult stand from Pella showing two female figures atop animal heads (photo by the author).

made by hand. They stand on either side of what appears to be a representation of a closed doorway.

As lions, along with columns or trees and doves, have been identified as being symbols of the goddess (Keel and Uehlinger 1998: fig. 58), when shown in conjunction with female figures, one can hardly deny the intention. By pairing female figures with lions in particular, and by placing them at the entrance to a model shrine, the aggressive or protective side of the goddess becomes clear (Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 58).

Associations with lions and female figures in general however are best seen on the famous Ta'anach Cult Stand (Figure 2.1) where the bottom tier reveals two flanking lions

being held by the ears by a female deity, who is likely a representation of Asherah (Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 157).

The other option for the figurine fragments is that they were originally positioned somewhere else and the wad of clay on top of the lion represents all that is left of a column. The motif of a lion supporting an architectural element associated with religion is a Syrian tradition (Kletter, Ziffer and Zwickel 2006: 153). A Middle Bronze Age basin from Ebla and an Iron Age façade of the sanctuary at 'Ain Dara are both supported with lion figures (Ziffer 2005: 144-45; Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 18-19). The motif appears elsewhere as well, including the nearly-complete model shrine from Khirbet Qeiyafa (Figure 49) in Israel that dates to the Iron Age I/ Early Iron Age IIA. The model reveals a large opening with two small crouching lions flanking each side of the entrance. On top of each lion is a ribbed column that extends upwards to the lintel. The previously mentioned unprovenanced model shrine attributed to the Transjordanian region, shows two crouching lions beside two female figurines acting as columns (Figure 3.18).

If the lion from Object 605/607 is supporting a column, what is to be made of the two female figurine fragments? As they were found with the other fragments making up the model, it was assumed that they were part of the model. What if they were instead, located within the model itself? The figures show no residue indicating they were attached to anything. If they were part of the model then they were only attached at the feet and/or head with their bodies acting as columns separated from the main body of the model. This is certainly possible, and due to the fact that there are two figurine fragments of similar size, it is more likely that they were flanking elements locating on either side of the entrance to the shrines. However, there still remains the possibility that there could

have been freestanding figurines placed within the model shrine itself. The Middle Bronze Age jar shrine from Ashkelon (Stager 1991: 24-29) that contained a silver calf (Figure 2.3) and residue from the interior of other model shrines, such as the niche shrine from Wadi ath-Thamed WT-13 (Daviau 2008: 298) (Figure 4.7), reveal evidence that may represent the location of an attached figure. Therefore, the potential for figures to be placed within a model, including this one, is not entirely out of the question.

The remaining fragments of the model include the middle portion of what is probably the lintel (Figure 5.14). Consisting of what would have been a curved slab, it is



Figure 5.14. Four fragments from Object 605/607. The curved lintel with a central knob in at the top (photo by the author).

difficult to tell if the curve is concave or convex. Speculation that the curve was concave can be reinforced by the suggestion that the lintel curved upwards towards the ends and terminated in rounded knobs or horns much like the Large Tall al-‘Umayri Model Shrine (B000016, see Chapter 4). If this orientation is to be accepted, then it can be suggested that the groove running along the convex edge of the lintel was at the bottom. The fragment also has preserved a rounded, squared knob located in the middle of the lintel.

Many model shrines have knob-like attachments centrally located on the lintel such as a small Iron Age II model from Tell Achzib (Muller 2002: fig. 130), the previously mentioned Late Bronze Age Dayr ‘Alla pot shrine (Figure 4.9), an Iron Age II model shrine attributed to the Mt. Nebo region (Muller 2002: fig. 178), and an Iron Age I-II model shrine from Kerak (Muller 2002: fig. 177) (Figure 5.15).



Figure 5.15. Model shrine from Kerak (photo by Robert Bates).

The lintel of the model shows remnants of dark red paint indicating that at the very least, the lintel, as well as the knob, was once fully painted. Traces of paint on other fragments including on the column located on the left-hand side as well as on the lion, indicates a strong probability that the entire model was originally painted a dark red.

Object 605/607 was found in Field A, Square 12, Locus 7, which corresponds to a long room southwest of the Eastern High Place. The remains were found in Locus 7, which was dated to the Mamluk period due to the mixture of Iron Age II and Mamluk pottery. Stratigraphically, the model shrine is not connected with any of the surrounding architecture, however, the director of Khirbat ‘Ataruz has stated in conversation that this



area was highly disturbed due to the Mamluk burials and plundering that took place. Therefore, it is plausible to place the date of Object 605/607 within the Early Iron Age II based on the associated pottery as well as the stylistic elements that can be discerned from the fragments of the model. The presence of flanking lions and likely female figures acting as columns further attests an Iron Age II setting. The combined motifs convey an association with the goddess Asherah as are demonstrated by the previously mentioned examples. The craftsmanship of this model appears to be of a higher quality than most; it was painted, at least partially, and the existing fragments reveal the work of a trained artisan or the very least, someone who had natural abilities and cared about the aesthetics of the object.

#### Registration: AA01-039: The Large Figure Model Shrine

The clay used for this model shrine appears to be well-levigated with a dark core containing fine grits of calcite and dark temper. Due to its small size and singular “room,” it can be described as a niche model, having a large opening in the front and a rectangular shape resembling a small shoebox (Figure 5.16). Attached to the left-side of the “entryway” is a large figurine that was likely matched on the other side by a similar figure that is now missing. Object AA01-039 has been given an MP AMT of MS(NM)/P, AF (Table 31).



Figure 5.16. Object AA01-039, front and side view (photo by Robert Bates).

Table 31

MP AMT for Object AA01-039; MS(NM)/P, AF.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
<b>MS – Model Shrine</b>	PM – Pot Model	F – Fenestration(s)
	SM – Slab Model	<b>P – Paint</b>
	<b>NM – Niche Model</b>	A – Applique
CS – Cult Stand	CS – Cylindrical Stand	I – Incising
	SS – Slab Stand	<b>AF – Attached Figures</b>
UN - Undetermined		

The model was found on the floor directly in front of the stone dais located in the right-hand side of the stone platform on the northwest corner of the Main Sanctuary Room (Field A). It was built of clay slabs approximately 1.7 cm thick. The back wall of the model is sturdier than the sides, averaging 2.4 cm in thickness, with the edges where the back joins the side walls being the thickest of all. The left side is preserved nearly in its entirety and shows evidence of having been slipped and burnished all over in light

brown. On top of this slip, at least three stripes of a dark red paint, varying in thickness, can be distinguished and they appear to run from top to bottom.

The pieces that make up the box were connected when wet and one can distinguish finger marks smoothing the interior of the box in an attempt to blend the lines of the join, and to smooth the interior texture of the clay. The back exterior of the box is very crude and seems to have been placed on an uneven surface while possibly working on the attached figure at the front, indicating that the model shrine itself was not to be seen in the round. It may have been freestanding as there is no evidence of it being attached to a wall. However, it cannot be ruled out that it was to be placed in a niche. The figure is unusually large in comparison with the box it is attached to, and it does not seem to have been able to stand upright on its own without tilting backwards, making for an awkward presentation. The finishing and painted design of the preserved side assumes nonetheless, that it was to be seen from at least three sides.

The top of the model has stripes of dark red paint, yet it does not appear to have been slipped like the preserved side. At least eight thick, uneven stripes can be distinguished and they run vertically from the back to the front of the shrine opening. It also appears that the painted stripes are connected by a horizontal line at the back. As the front part of the shrine box is broken it is impossible to tell if these stripes were also connected by a painted line at the front portion or at the back portion of the façade.

Attached to the front of the preserved left side is a nearly complete figure (Figure 5.17). The head was broken at the upper neck, preventing us from identifying any telling



Figure 5.17. Figure from Object AA01-039 (photo by the author).

facial features or hairstyle. The figure was made separately by hand and applied to the box, but as the head is missing we cannot deduce whether the head was also handmade or if it was mold-made and then attached to the body separately.

The neck is thick, maybe out of necessity to support the head. The shoulders are broad and, at first glance, there appears to have been applied breasts which will be discussed below. Yet, considering that the rest of the body appears to be male, and taking into account at least one other identified model shrine (Object AA01-029) and a large cult stand (Object AA01-007, Chapter 6) found in the same area have male figures, it can be reasonably suggested that this figure is likely male as well.

There is a clear indication of a strap that would have been placed over the left shoulder. It has since broken off, or perhaps another material such as metal was applied

here. While no clear evidence can be detected on the right shoulder, a rounded chip has flaked off on the right breast area, which could indicate another strap. Another consideration is that the two rounded areas on the upper chest could have been breasts that have since flaked off. This could suggest an androgynous figure, but this was not necessarily unusual for figurines or other figures that have been found on model shrines (Herr, Clark, and Trenchard 2001: fig. 16) as has already been discussed in Chapter 4. Parallels to the type of armor covering the torso and having shoulder straps can best be found in Egypt. In Thebes, a 22<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty (ca. 850 B.C.E.) stele, contemporaneous with the time period of the 'Ataruz objects being discussed, shows the sun god Re-Harakhty wearing a short, belted kilt and plated armor top with shoulder straps similar to the proposed dress of Object AA01-039 (Görg 1998: fig. 28).

The arms of the figure are close to the body and bent at the elbow with forearms turned inward ending in what appears to be clenched fists resting on the belly. The fingers were made by impressing lines on a round disk of clay, and while they appear to be balled into a fist, it is quite possible that they are just crudely made and represent hands resting flat upon the belly.

There is an indication that the figure was wearing a belt or sash, possibly made from a very thin slab of clay, which has since flaked off. One can detect the slightly raised edges where the belt was originally attached, approximately 1.2 cm in width. The missing belt appears to have been painted with a similar dark red brown paint to that of the striping on the sides and top of the box. Remnants of a painted line can be seen underneath the left side of the belt, indicating that it was painted after being applied to the body. Another option is that the belt could have been made of another material such as

metal and applied to the figure after firing. Due to the residual paint and raised clay edge however, it is most likely that the belt was applied clay, which has subsequently fallen off.

Below the belt, it appears that the figure was wearing a short skirt or kilt. This is difficult to determine however, as it is slipped the same color as the body and there is no discernable bottom edge. The only indication is that the “hem” ends at mid-thigh between the legs. If this is not a representation of a short skirt, then one might deduce a rather low crotch and stumpy legs.

Even if the figure is wearing a skirt, the legs are disproportionately short compared to the rest of the body. Knees are indicated by a slight bump and the feet are pointed downward with suggested toes made by long impressed lines. The ankles appear to be encircled by dark painted lines, indicating anklets, which would not be entirely unexpected as several model shrines from Syria, the Levant, and Transjordan have been flanked with figurines wearing jewelry. The 11<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. model shrine from Kerak (Figure 5.15), and the previously mentioned 10<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. model from Transjordan (Figure 3.22), possess flanking female figurines that are wearing substantial pieces of jewelry (Ackerman 2012: 556).

The feet present a conundrum. They are pointing straight down, which at first glance could indicate a recumbent position. The legs are also slightly bent when looking at them in profile. The figure is clearly not resting on a bed as might be proposed however, but has been attached to the wall in such a way as to appear freestanding. The undersides of the feet are resting on a lump of clay, which would have formed a step or angled ledge that originally formed the base or threshold of the shrine. Similarly, the Old

Babylonian (19<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.) relief plaque (Figure 5.18) shows the Queen of the Night, assumed to be Ishtar, standing with feet pointing straight down in a manner similar to Object AA01-039.

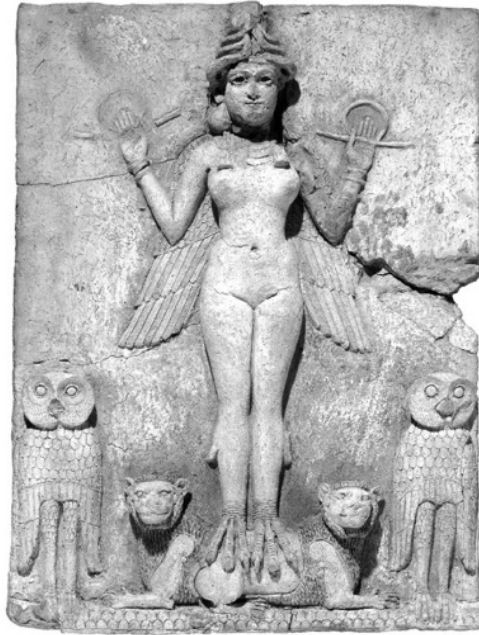


Figure 5.18. The Burney Relief, currently located in the British Museum ([https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=1355376&partId=1](https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1355376&partId=1)).

When the figure was attached to the box, the exterior seam was smoothed as the clay was blended up to and over the rear and left hand side of the shrine. The join is best seen on the interior. The inner profile view gives the impression of the figure lying down as the legs are slightly bent and feet facing downward. A coil of wet clay was applied to the connection point where the figure was attached to the wall of the box. The coil was then smoothed down, albeit unevenly, to form the seamless connection. The coil of clay can be detected at the lower leg area so that one may see the roundness of the side of the legs.

The entire body of the figure at first appeared to have been covered by a creamy white slip until cleaning revealed that the white color was actually residue and encrustations. Restoration has since revealed that the figure is actually covered by a light brown slip with painted details. Unfortunately, most of the details have eroded away from the arms and torso region. It appears that the figure may have been burnished and this is most evident on the lower abdomen region where traces of the slip is most evident.

Who was this figure and what did it represent? One consideration to be pondered is that the truncated body could represent a dwarfed figure; a variation of the Egyptian god Bes. Like many Egyptian gods, the worship of Bes was exported to other areas of the Near East, and the god proved especially popular with the Phoenicians (Culican 1968: 93). His worship became widespread by the New Kingdom and only grew outwards from there. This would fit in nicely with the 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. date given to this model shrine. Could it be that Bes's popularity migrated its way to the Levant and incorporated itself into the worship of the people of 'Ataruz? An image found on a painted pithos seems to support this supposition.

From 1975 to 76, the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. site of Kuntillet 'Ajrud (Horvat Teiman) was excavated by Ze'ev Meshel (Meshel 1978: 50). Among the many finds were several inscriptions and an interesting pithos (Pithos A) which bore a controversial Hebrew inscription accompanied by crudely painted images; one of who has been identified as the Egyptian god Bes (Meshel 1978: 53, fig. 8). The inscription, which mentions YHWH and Asherah together, has also helped confirm the belief scholars have that the Israelites worshiped Asherah and other foreign deities alongside Yahweh. This was folk religion; the religion of the people.



The pose of the figure attached to Object AA01-039 contributes to the theory of a Bes identification, along with the stubby legs and elongated torso. Bes sometimes appeared with arms bent in a similar fashion to this figure. If we are to consider that the figure is indeed not wearing a skirt but is rather representing a dwarfed figure, then perhaps the proposal of Bes can be entertained. Another point boosting this theory is the suggestion that this figure is wearing anklets. Figures of Bes are often shown with him wearing anklets and a short kilt. Adding to this possibility of a hybridized version of Bes is the clear Egyptianization of other cult objects found within the same context as this model shrine. The strongest contender of an Egyptian influence is a yet to be identified, yet finely crafted, plate-like bronze object featuring a *uraeus* that was located on the altar in the Main Sanctuary Room near where this model shrine was found (Ji 2012: 207). This feature attests the contacts being made in the cosmopolitan world of the Iron Age and how a remote site like Khirbet ‘Ataruz was likely connected to major trade routes, which will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

Another option to be considered is that Object AA01-039’s flanking figure(s) represent a human figure or, as Susan Ackerman puts it, “a liminal divine agent who safeguard(s) the deity housed within those shrines” (Ackerman 2012: 552). Many model shrines featured mirroring figures that flanked the entrance. One of the best examples from Jordan can be found in the previously mentioned model shrine from Kerak (Figure 5.15). A niche shrine, like Object AA01-039, the model from Kerak has been given the a wall, and was subsequently roughly removed.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Acquired by the American University of Beirut Archaeology Museum in 1967. No associated finds putting the artifact into context were found with it. However, the object reveals that it was forcefully broken off from its ceramic “architectural” context as it shows bad breaks all along the edges (See

The above discussed figures, like nearly all discovered on model shrines, are female. However, while most model shrines and cult stands reveal matching female figures at the entrance (see Chapter 4, which discusses the Tall al-‘Umayri Model Shrine and the proposal of two flanking androgynous figures), the fact that the Large ‘Ataruz Cult Stand (Object AA01-007, Chapter 6) features two different male figures, causes speculation that the missing element from the other side of this model shrine may have represented a different god, entity, or person; but likely male as well. It could have also conceivably displayed a column or plant, but most likely, an identical mirroring figure. Symmetry seems to have been preferred. These are all speculations to be sure, nevertheless they are important ones to consider. The originality of all the architectural models of ‘Ataruz causes one to ponder the unconventional.

It can be deduced that Object AA01-039 was a niche model shrine with two attached figures, likely male, and that it was placed in the Main Sanctuary Room at ‘Ataruz sometime during the early Iron Age II. As it was discovered at the base of the dais within the niche of the far end of the room, the object may have been placed directly on the pedestal itself, or was propped up by its base. Whether or not the niche contained a freestanding deity within its niche is unknown, but the fact that no freestanding figurines were found within the Main Sanctuary Room lends to the speculation that the niche was left empty, and that the figure(s) represented guardians to the interior realm of the model. Why the figure is male and not female is a question still waiting to be explored further, as male figures flanking entrances to architectural models have never before presented themselves.

Registration: AA01-029:

The Egyptianized Figure Model Shrine

Object AA01-029 (Figure 5.19) is a niche shrine similar to Object AA01-039.



Figure 5.19. AA01-029, frontal view (photo by Robert Bates).

However, this model shrine is larger and appears to be more finely made with a sturdier box. Object AA01-029 has been given an MP AMT MS(NM)/P, I, AF (Table 32). It was

Table 32

MP AMT for Object AA01-029; MS(NM)/P, I, AF.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
<b>MS – Model Shrine</b>	PM – Pot Model	F – Fenestration(s)
	SM – Slab Model	<b>P – Paint</b>
	<b>NM – Niche Model</b>	A – Applique
CS – Cult Stand	CS – Cylindrical Stand	<b>I – Incising</b>
	SS – Slab Stand	<b>AF – Attached Figures</b>
UN – Undetermined		

found on the middle step of the offering platform in the Main Sanctuary Room and was surrounded by pedestal vessels and several *kernoi*. The clay used for this model shrine appears to be well-levigated with a dark core containing fine grits of calcite and dark temper.

The interior dimensions of the model shrine box are 13.7 cm by 8.3 cm. The back of the box is preserved along the entire right side. The exterior dimensions of the box are 14.3 cm to a narrower 11.1 cm at the back. The length of the box is about 14 cm from the back of the box to the rear of the façade. The façade extends upwards about 3.85 cm, peaking out slightly at both corners. The front of the façade is 5.55 cm in height and extends along the entire front of the model, extending out about 3.23 cm from the edges of the box. Evidence of a frame, preserved on the right side, leads to the conclusion that the entire shrine was framed on both sides. The frame acts as a support for the partially preserved figurine on the right. As has already been established, model shrines often display matching pairs of figures on either side of the entrance, therefore it can be postulated that this niche shrine also possessed another matching figure on the other side similar to Object AA01-039 (Figure 5.17).

The model has a basic rectangular shape and it can be assumed its height was taller than its width, much like Object AA01-039. The preserved top, back, and sides are made from thick slabs that were joined and smoothed creating finished rounded edges inside and out. This model appears to be of a higher artistic quality than Object AA01-039, and shows evidence of a knowledge or appreciation of good craftsmanship. The preserved exterior of the model has been carefully smoothed all over and the interior has been finished as well and treated with red paint. In fact, red paint covers the entire

preserved front of the model, including the façade and preserved figure. The paint extends around the edges of the façade and frame, but the exterior behind the façade of the model remains free of paint or any other treatment other than smoothing. Because the width of the model at the back has been preserved, the overall width can be estimated with a fair amount of accuracy (22.3 cm). The total length however, is pure conjecture and based upon the existing proportions of the figure.

The façade of the model is made of a thick slab of clay. It undulates somewhat across the top and bottom, but there is a slight peak that extends upward and outwards slightly to form a “horn” shape at the preserved right hand side of the frame. The façade is decorated with two deep grooves formed by three thick coils laid horizontally across the front. The grooves end in rounded edges approximately 1 cm from the right edge and it is expected that the missing left-hand side mirrored the left. At the top of the façade in the estimated center, there is a small wad of clay approximately 1.23 cm in width. It was likely longer, as a similar bit of clay can be ascertained coming down the front of the façade and connecting to the top ridge. While it is possible that this is just a wad of clay that adhered to the façade prior to firing, the overall high artistic quality of the model begs to consider that this would not go unnoticed. The lack of any further detail prevents us from concluding what this bit of clay might have been, but the fact that it is located atop the center causes pause. As so many model shrines have attachments at the center of their façades, it is reasonable to propose a similar attachment such as the one that has been identified on the Large Tall al-‘Umayri Model Shrine (B000016), as well as the above discussed Dual Lions and Female Figurines Model Shrine from ‘Ataruz (605/607) (Figures 5.11 and 5.12).

Attached to the right side of the façade is a “frame” on which the surviving figure is situated. It can be assumed that the frame extended around both the right and left-hand sides. Only 8.2 cm is preserved on the right side (measuring from the bottom edge of the façade down to where the frame is broken), and seems to have had the sole purpose of supporting and cradling the attached figure. It appears to have been formed as a thick slab that was applied to the outer edge of the front of the model and then smoothed back to connect with the rear. The care given this model is evident with the careful smoothing to ensure that there was no evident seam visible that connected the frame to the model even though the connection point was behind the frame itself. This attention again demonstrates either the work of a trained artisan, or the hand of a natural talent.

The existing figure consists of a complete head, shoulders, and upper torso. The left side is broken at the top of the shoulder and angles downward to end halfway down the right side of the torso and arm. The figure was made in a mold as was evidenced upon the restoration of the model. The back of the figure is similar to mold-made Iron Age figurines found elsewhere throughout Jordan including one found on the surface near Field A at ‘Ataruz (Ji and Bates 2014: fig. 30). Another example of mold-made figures on architectural models can be found on the previously mentioned large cult stand from Pella (Potts, College and Edwards 1985: 204).

It appears that the figure, after being removed from the mold when leather-hard, was then pressed deeply into the frame about halfway through the thickness of the slab. More clay was applied to the interior edge to add support to the figure. The interior was then smoothed, creating a seamless transition from the left side of the figure to the interior of the model. Care was taken to firmly attach the figure in a way that assured its

durability and guaranteed that the figure would not break off the model while it was in use.

What is preserved of the existing figure is covered entirely with the red paint that also covers the interior, frame, and façade of the model. We can speculate that details of the face of the figure might have been painted similar to the Large ‘Ataruz Cult Stand (see Chapter 6) along with any clothing or armor details. However, as the existing red paint is highly eroded on the figure, we can only guess about what facial details may have originally existed that would allow an understanding of the identity or gender of the figure. It is evident however, that the face itself was originally finely formed. It is framed by a distinctive Egyptianized “pageboy” hairstyle which consisted of blunt cut bangs and straight, bobbed hair ending at the top of the shoulders. The top part of the head is eroded, so it is difficult to ascertain if there was a headdress or some sort of hair treatment, but a subtle hint can be determined from the right side of the head. Where the head connects with the frame, halfway up the side of the skull, there appears to be an elongated bump that is punctuated with two slight dents. Could this be part of a diadem? It is pure conjecture, but this is the only evidence that hints at adornment.

As mentioned, the facial features are badly worn, but one can detect two almond-shaped eyes and an aquiline nose. Two slight dents are present at the base of the nose on either side. There is no indication of a mouth, so it is assumed one was painted on. The eyes were likely painted as well, although no traces of paint remain. The face shape overall is a fine half-oval, and the profile view gives us a slight, sideways V-shape with the point being the tip of the nose.

The shoulders are broad and the existing upper right arm is held down against the body. There is no evidence as to the position of the other arm or as to the possibility that the figure(s) may have been holding something or simply grasping the belly as the figure from The Large Figure Model Shrine (AA01-039) (Figure 5.17) appears to be. Enough of the torso exists however, to clearly indicate that no breasts are present. This, combined with the typical Egyptianized, male hairstyle and dark red “skin,” allows for the strong possibility that this figure, like Object AA01-039, is male. The location of this model on the middle step of the offering platform in the Main Sanctuary Room of Field A indicates that it was prominently featured in the religious rituals of the Temple Complex.

Registration: AA01-7: The Red Niche Model Shrine

Object AA01-7 (Figure 5.20) is a niche model shrine that was found in three fragments. No information could be gathered from documentation, but discussions with the director of ‘Ataruz confirmed that the object came from the Main Sanctuary Room in Field A, which places it in early Iron Age IIA. The reconstructed fragments form the back of a niche that measures 17.4 cm tall and 13.3 cm in width. As only the back portion

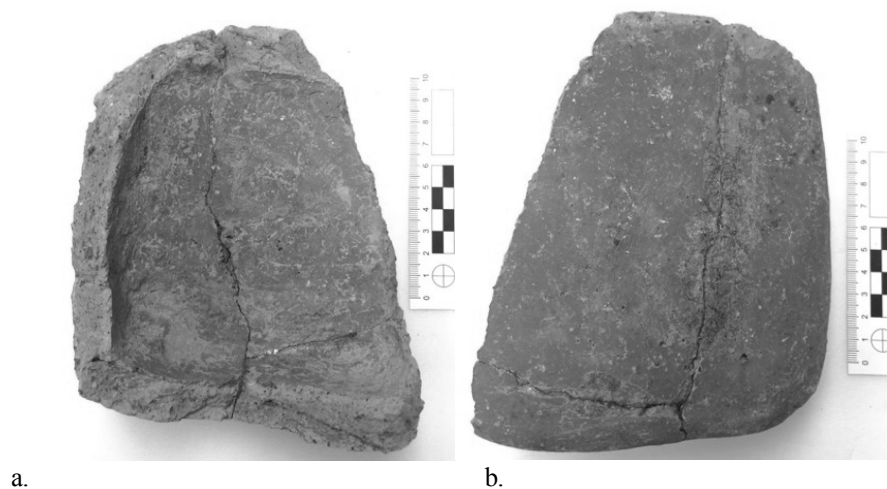


Figure 5.20. Object AA01-7 a. interior, and b. exterior (photo by the author).



of the model has been recovered, it is impossible to know whether or not any figures or iconography was attached to the opening. Object AA01-7 has been given an MP AMT of MS(NM)/P (Table 33).

Table 33

MP AMT for Object AA01-7; MS(NM)/P.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
<b>MS – Model Shrine</b>	PS – Pot Model	F – Fenestration(s)
	SM – Slab Model	<b>P – Paint</b>
	<b>NM – Niche Model</b>	A – Applique
CS – Cult Stand	CS – Cylindrical Stand	I – Incising
	SS – Slab Stand	AF – Attached Figures
UN – Undetermined		

The entire box is covered in a dark red slip (Munsell 10R 4/6-red) inside and out and consists of slabs of varying thickness (from 1.6 cm to 2.8 cm). The edges have been rounded significantly, and if what we are looking at is the preserved bottom part of the model, then it is clear that it would not have been able to stand upright unless a stabilizing frame existed at the front. As only the box element of the model has been preserved, it is impossible to determine anything further at this point. It's presence within the Main Sanctuary Room however, substantiates further the premise that multiple architectural models featured prominently into the religious practices of sanctuary complexes, temples, and shrines of the smaller city-states of the Levant during the Iron Age.

Registration: 673: The Multiple Fragment

Architectural Model

The remains of this architectural model were rediscovered in a mesh bag in a corner of the storage room at the Madaba Museum. Consisting of 16 fragments (Figure 5.21), the pieces clearly belong to a larger, rectangular model, but no further detail is evident. Therefore Object 673 has been assigned an MP AMT of UN/N (Table 34).



Figure 5.21. The multiple pieces of Object 673 (photo by the author).

Table 34

PP AMT for Object 673; UN/N.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
MS – Model Shrine	PS – Pot Model	F – Fenestration(s)
	SM – Slab Model	P – Paint
	NM – Niche Model	A – Applique
CS – Cult Stand	CS – Cylindrical Stand	I – Incising
	SS – Slab Stand	AF – Attached Figures
<b>UN – Undetermined</b>		<b>N – None</b>

Initially discovered in Field A, Square 11, the pieces were found scattered within Locus 12. Eight of the pieces join together, but none of the pieces are reconstructable enough to determine an overall height or width. Corner and edge pieces are evident however, and it is clear that the model had at least one smoothed side and one very rough side, indicating that the back was probably unfinished, similar to the back of the Large Figure Model Shrine (AA01-039) (Figure 5.16). All of the pieces are very sturdy with an average thickness of 2 cm. The body has a medium gray core with evidence of lots of straw and calcite temper. Two pieces in particular are interesting as they are curved and fit together to reveal a significant arc that if belonging to the top part of the model, could indicate an overall maximum width of 28 cm. The curving nature of the two fragments could cause one to question if it even belongs to the model, but the color, texture, and indicative rough back, along with the fact that they were found alongside the other fragments, indicates the same clay composition as the other fragments therefore belonging to the same object.

There is only one corner piece that indicates an opening, but no evidence of any attached figure is present. Lacking in slip, paint, or other iconography, these fragments indicate an undecorated slab model. There is only one piece that does not fit the others, Different in thickness, color, and texture, it likely belongs to another model that has not been identified. Square 11 in Field A is located outside and to the right of the Main Sanctuary Room in the Central Courtyard. It could be that this particular model was placed outside of the rooms of the sanctuary; possibly on the steps.

## Conclusion

Khirbat 'Ataruz has thus far produced the largest collection of reconstructable architectural models in Jordan. Individual fragments have not been identified like the fragments from Tall al-'Umayri, as all known architectural model fragments have been found in piles, allowing for at least a partial reconstruction (with the exception of the random sherd found with Object 673) and certain identification. Although excavation has been limited, all of the architectural models discussed in this study have come from Field A and are associated with the Temple Complex during the height of its use during the Iron Age IIA period (Temple Phase II), which the director has dated to the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. Devastation by fire of the temple complex could be associated with the destruction described in the Mesha Stele, which scholars have dated to around 840 B.C.E. The importance of a secure date could prove to be monumental in lending strong evidence to the possibility that the excavated cultic objects are Israelite in origin. The other possibility remains however, that the cultic objects are all Moabite and that the destruction of the Temple Complex fell at a time when the area was under Moabite control thus placing the all the cultic remains within a Moabite context.

Recently, Khirbat 'Ataruz director Chang-Ho Ji, has been conducting surveys of the region in an interest to explore the possible influence 'Ataruz might have had on the region during the Iron Ages. Connected to the King's Highway via a discovered Eastern road system, the geographic position of 'Ataruz placed it in a strategic position to take full advantage of the influx of goods and ideas that funneled its way through along the busy trade route. Ji has also found evidence of other road systems leading to the site from the north, south, and west. These ancient Iron Age road systems from all four compass

points, dated by ceramic pottery analysis along the routes, places ‘Ataruz at the center of the region during a time when land trade routes were beginning to dominate over sea routes.<sup>10</sup> The prolific roadway system that connected ‘Ataruz to major trade routes validates this site’s importance. As such, it is reasonable to propose that the site also functioned as a major center of religious, economic, and political power for at least a short period of time.

The proliferation of goods of all kinds accompanied by people from various cultures such as Egypt, Phoenicia, Arabia, and Assyria, would have led to an exposure to various cultural artistic styles, techniques, and religious practices. The plaque-like bronze object adorned with cobras (Ji 2012: taf. 49) (Figure 5.22) found on the main platform in

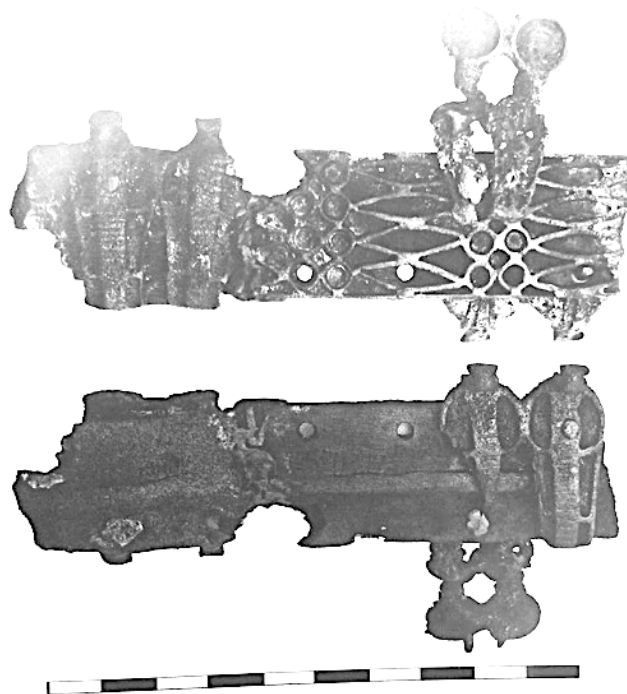


Figure 5.22. Bronze plaque from the Main Sanctuary Room of Field A displaying multiple *uraei* (photo by Robert Bates).

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<sup>10</sup> This information was shared by Ji on May 26, 2016 at the International Conference on the History and Archaeology of Jordan meetings held in Amman, Jordan.

the Main Sanctuary Room where many of the architectural models were found demonstrates this. The piece clearly illustrates Egyptian workmanship at a higher level, but seems to be made of an alloy of bronze, indicating a trained Egyptian craftsman working with local materials. In addition, the great variety of artistic styles and motifs evidenced through the many architectural models found in Field A indicate an exposure to differing cultural and religious norms; a virtual melting pot of religious artistic expression.

However, archeological evidence for trade is difficult to pin down. The only inscription discovered at 'Ataruz is the stone pedestal which is still awaiting final publication of the translation. Therefore, it is currently not possible to deduce the main source of trade at 'Ataruz, or if the temple complex of Field A functioned as a repository for goods. The only current indication of economy and the history of 'Ataruz comes from the Mesha Stele, and the biblical account of Moab where in 2 Kings 2:4 it is described that the Moabite King, Mesha, raised sheep and paid tribute to King Omri and his son Ahab of Israel in the form of lambs and wool.

When Ahab died, Mesha refused to continue paying taxes to Ahab's successor Jehoram who then sought help from Judah's King Jehoshaphat. Together they overcame the tempestuous Mesha, who then threw himself at the mercy of Chemosh in an attempt to save himself and his final stronghold. By publicly sacrificing his oldest son and successor and burning him as an offering, he succeeded in horrifying all who witnessed it and his enemies retreated as told in 2 Kings 3. The biblical account states that then, "there came a great wrath against Israel, and they departed from him and returned to their own land (2 Kings 3:27, NASB). According to the Mesha Stele, Mesha states that he

managed to “throw off the yoke” of Israel by destroying several Israelite-controlled cities that had once been part of Moabite territory. One of the cities purportedly destroyed by Mesha in his rabid attempt to regain control of Moab, was ‘Ataruz, which scholars have accepted as the ‘Atarot mentioned in the Mesha Stele, lines 11 and 12 (Routledge 2004: 135). The Mesha Stele also reveals that Israel built ‘Ataruz for the Gadites. Mesha claims to have completely destroyed the city, to have killed all the inhabitants, and resettled ‘Ataruz with the people of Sharon and Maharit (Routledge 2004: 135).

In conclusion, the architectural models at Khirbet ‘Ataruz reveal a complexity of styles and artistic hands, which helps substantiate the claims of ‘Ataruz director Ji of connecting roads from all compass points and the nearby King’s Highway. These roads would have created opportunity for traveling artisans to influence the artistic traditions of Moab in unique ways that are evidenced in the cultic remains found primarily in the Main Sanctuary Room. The archaeological context of these architectural models paint the possibility of a destruction by Mesha, although another yet unknown destruction is feasible. There are several questions that one must consider; 1) are the statements made in the Mesha Stele accurate?, 2) is the site identified in the Mesha Stele as Atarot indeed ‘Ataruz?, and 3) are Ji’s dating methods based on architectural and pottery analysis correct? If the answers to all three questions are yes, then it seems logical that the destruction of the Temple Phase II Sanctuary Complex of Field A is the destruction made by Mesha around 840 B.C.E. If this is the case, then the artifacts, including the architectural models found in the Main Sanctuary Room, must be Israelite. The question of whether these cultic objects are Israelite or Moabite is still unresolved, but the implications could be monumental. What can be concluded for certain at this point is that

architectural models played a vital part of the cultic practice of 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. ‘Ataruz. The fact that so many were found *in situ* and in a reconstructable state allows for the following proposal; that these models were not ritually destroyed, but rather were in use when ‘Ataruz was attacked and subsequently destroyed, likely by Mesha. The Main Sanctuary Room does not appear to have been reused as ‘Ataruz continued to be occupied and was rebuilt, and the rooms of the Sanctuary Complex show no evidence of further use. This attests to the possibility that the sanctity of objects utilized in holy spaces, even when they belonged to the enemy, were considered with respect. This could be due to the presumption that these neighboring tribal groups and cities shared many of the same deities as evidenced by archaeological finds, such as the pithos at Kuntillet ‘Ajrud, that corroborate the worship of Yahweh alongside a Canaanite goddess.

The reconstructable state of the architectural models of Khirbet ‘Ataruz have also allowed for a better assessment of the art than the many fragments from Tall al-‘Umayri. While there are far more identifiable fragments at ‘Umayri, they exist in single sherds and do not allow for a full analysis of style or artistic skill level. The only near complete model is the ‘Umayri Model discussed in Chapter 4. By taking the evidence at face value, it seems that the artistic skill at ‘Ataruz exceeded that of ‘Umayri. However, given the fact that the only assessment available is that of the ‘Umayri Model, which is simpler in comparison with the models found at ‘Ataruz, it is best to withhold any conclusions at this point. It does appear however, that many hands created the ‘Ataruz models indicating that multiple artisans created them. Where these artists came from will never be known. Many could have been residents of ‘Ataruz, but some of the models may have been brought in through trade or created by a visitor passing through.



The next chapter will further investigate the importance of these models to 'Ataruz with a detailed study of the largest and most complex model of them all, The Large Khirbet 'Ataruz Cult Stand.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE LARGE KHIRBET 'ATARUZ CULT STAND

#### **Introduction**

Within the Main Sanctuary Room of Field A, which has been dated to Temple Phase II, or Iron Age IIA (specifically, the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.), a concentration of objects was excavated from the northwestern part of the room. They included a store jar with bull and ibex appliques, a bull statue, libation vessels, bowls, lamps, an Egyptianized bronze plaque (Figure 5.22), and multiple pieces of a large cult stand (Object AA01-007). The majority of the objects were located on or near the room's offering dais and standing stone pedestal. Mostly found in thick ashy deposits of 10-20 cm deep, all of the objects seem to date to the final phase of the sanctuary's use as most of them appear to have been damaged when the temple was destroyed by fire (Ji 2012: 210).

According to Khirbet 'Ataruz director Chang-Ho Ji, the platform in the Main Sanctuary Room likely functioned as the main offering installation for the chief deity that was worshipped at the temple complex of 'Aratuz. In addition, the fact that surfaces linked to the Main Sanctuary Room and adjacent rooms produced more than 200 cultic vessels and objects *in situ*, strongly confirms the religious function of the entire building complex of Field A (Ji 2012: 210).

Object AA01-007 was originally thought to be two separate objects; a ceramic model shrine (Figure 6.1) and a four-horned, ceramic altar (Figure 6.2). Both were found



Figure 6.1. Object AA01-007 reconstructed as it originally was perceived (photo by J. Burnett, <http://www.ataruz.org/>).

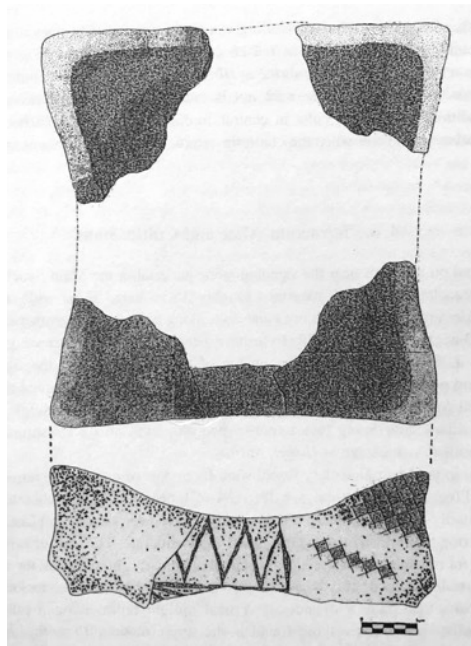


Figure 6.2. A drawing of the four-horned altar showing a top-down view of Object AA01-007, as well as a side view (Ji 2012: 214, fig. 3).

in pieces, with all the fragments identified as being part of a four-horned altar found on the floor near the standing-stone pedestal located in the northwestern side in the Main Sanctuary Room. It was originally postulated that this altar was used to burn incense and was initially placed either on top of the standing-stone pedestal, or on the right edge of the offering platform in front of it (Ji 2012: 213) (Figure 6.3). The object, formally



Figure 6.3. The digitally reconstructed Main Sanctuary Room of Field A showing the offering platform with the bottom half of the Large ‘Ataruz Cult Stand. The remains of the four-horned altar can be seen below and to the right (digital reconstruction by Robert Bates).

known as a model shrine, was identified as having two stories and may have been placed in the central area of the offering platform. It is now known that these two objects belong together, forming a cult stand that seems to combine the structure and iconography of a model shrine, but is capped by a four-horned altar.

## Description

Object AA01-007 is currently the largest object in the corpus of architectural models being studied for this dissertation. The width of the stand measures approximately 30.7 cm across at the bottom, widening slightly as the sides rise. The right side measures a little over 34 cm, and the left side a little over 33 cm. The overall height can be determined to be approximately 60 cm, placing it about 10 cm taller in height than the cult stand from Pella (Smith & Potts: 1992: 97), the closest parallel in Jordan. This makes the ‘Ataruz Cult Stand the tallest of its kind to be found thus far in Jordan. An abundance of basalt temper is prevalent throughout the matrix of the model, which likely added strength to the large stand. Covered with painted details as well as having attached and incised figures, the ‘Ataruz Cult Stand is also the most iconographically-rich architectural model to have been discovered in Jordan.

The entire body of Object AA01-007 was made of thick slabs of clay that were carved while wet in order to create openings and has been given an MP AMT of CS(SS)/F, P, A, I, AF (Table 35). Most of the motifs were painted, with the façade being

Table 35

MP AMT for Object AA01-007; CS(SS)/F, P, A, I, AF.

SHAPE/TYPE		ORNAMENTATION
MS – Model Shrine	PM – Pot Model	<b>F – Fenestration(s)</b>
	SM – Slab Model	<b>P – Paint</b>
	NM – Niche Model	<b>A – Applique</b>
<b>CS – Cult Stand</b>	CS – Cylindrical Stand	<b>I – Incising</b>
	<b>SS – Slab Stand</b>	<b>AF – Attached Figures</b>
UN – Undetermined		

the most highly decorated; consisting of painted designs and sculpted and applied figures. The façade consists of a large opening around 21.75 cm in height and 16.4 cm in width, and is divided in the middle by what appears to be a slim column creating the illusion of two arched entryways. Within the “entryway” stand are two outward-facing male figures each holding a small animal. This opening can be identified as the main entrance or “door” to the cult stand.

In the Iron Age levels at Pella a similar model was discovered with two “windows” almost completely filled in with two figures (Figure 6.4). In the case of the



Figure 6.4. The Pella Cult Stand, frontal view (photo by the author).

Pella model, the mold-made, nude female images possess Hathor style hairdos. The Pella model has been dated to the 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. (Smith and Potts 1992: 95-99). Likewise,

some of the best parallels regarding one-room shrines or *naiiskoi* with figures attached on the façade or flanking the door can be found at the Phoenician site of Kamid el-Loz along with models from museum collections (Seeden 1979: pl.VI; Muller 1997: fig. 3:c). Upon closer inspection of the façade of Object AA01-007, the central column dividing the entry into two apparent parts reveals what is likely a depicted altar, which will be discussed below.

The preserved façade of Object AA01-007 extends to a height of around 38.2 cm and displays framed male figures. On either side of the standing male figures are painted lines of a dark red color that indicate decorated columns topped with palmette or lotus capitals. Above the heads of the male figures is a slab of clay that separates the two “stories” of the stand. The slab is approximately 32 cm wide and 5 cm in height and projects a few centimeters out from the surface of the ceramic walls creating what resembles an architectural entablature decorated with painted strips and a frieze of what may be lotus blossoms. Most of the entablature is covered with encrustations and is badly eroded however, making it difficult to ascertain the consistency of the design. One can detect a thick painted line at the base of the entablature, which seems to extend the length of it.

The following is a detailed description of the various elements of Object AA01-007. Comparisons to other cult stands, model shrines, and iconographical motifs will be discussed along the way. A summarization of what this cult stand may have been used for will then be explored in context with a proposal as to the meaning of the various motifs found on it.

## Parallels

### The Columns

On either side of the main openings, flanking the male figures, are columns appearing to have capitals of curved palmettes. At first glance, each capital appears to be proto-aeolic which would certainly fit within the time frame of Iron Age II. Proto-aeolic capitals have been found gracing the entrances to many model shrines from the Levant, including the large model shrine from Tall al-'Umayri (Herr 2007: fig. 4) (Figure 4.2) that is discussed in detail in Chapter 4. Other palmette capiteled model shrines can be found in Beatrice Muller's comprehensive publication on architectural models (Muller 2002) and include the earlier referenced model shrines from Tell el-Far'ah North (Muller 2002: figs. 143, 144) (Figure 3.17), and the Transjordanian region (Muller 2002: figs. 180.a, b, c) (Figure 3.18).

Each column extends downward to meet vertical lines that may indicate a column base or stylobate. The right side (Figure 6.5) is better preserved with the palmette capital column being quite clear. Its appearance is that of a plain, narrow column with two painted horizontal lines near the top and two more horizontal lines near the bottom. On either side of this narrow column is a slimmer vertical band creating what resembles a long reed culminating in the outward curve of a palmette. In between these two outward curving forms, the column continues upward until it narrows to a point, touching the underside of the entablature of the model. The combination of outward facing curls and the swelling pointed cap has the look of an Egyptian lotus, but is likely a stylistic take on





Figure 6.5. Right-hand painted “column” of Object AA01-007 (photo by author).

the classic palmette design that eventually would make its way to the proto-aeolic capitals of the Iron Ages.

The question must be asked; are these columns, or are they stylized palm trees? Most scholars will agree that the stylized palm tree was associated with the goddess Asherah. However, Ackerman states that we have to acknowledge that the image of the sacred tree was ubiquitous in Semitic art and identifying such trees with a particular god or goddess is often difficult (Ackerman 2003: 456). Sometimes this association is very clear as is in the instance of the 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. Ta’anach cult stand (Figure 2.1) where the stylized tree is depicted guarded by lions and flanked by caprids (Keel 1998: 41). On the stand, the presence of a female figure between two lions on the bottom-most

register further adds to an iconographic grouping that can be confidently associated with the goddess. However, Keel (1998: 42-43) argues that by Iron Age IIB, for which he gives the dates of 930-730 B.C.E., dates that correspond to the 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. date of the 'Ataruz artifacts being discussed, the connection of the tree with a male figure is less problematic due to the sacred tree being more and more frequently portrayed without a clear connection to a goddess. Considering that the figures on Object AA01-007 are male, this creates a reasonable possibility of stylized trees flanking both figures.

A parallel to the unique portrayal of the palmette column portrayed on Object AA01-007 can be found in a Judean stamp seal (Figure 6.6) from a private collection



Figure 6.6. Drawing of a Judean stamp seal showing two men flanking a central palmette column (Sass 1993: fig. 53).

(Sass 1993: 207, fig. 53). The epigraphy of the seal dates it to the pre-exilic period<sup>1</sup> due to an inscription stating that it is the property of Hilqiyahu, son of Padi (Sass 1993: 231). The interesting aspect of the seal has to do with its iconographic elements. It shows two men flanking a stylized tree or column capped by a palmette with a central stalk protruding upwards, similar to the upward protruding pointed element emanating from in

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<sup>1</sup> The pre-exilic period can be described as the time between the emergence of Israel and the Babylonian exile, dated to 586 B.C.E.

between the curling palmettes on Object AA01-007. Lemaire identifies this central element from the Judean stamp seal as a sacred tree, which was a well-known and prolific sacred symbol in Palestine during the Iron Ages (Lemaire 1986: 311).

The ubiquitous palm tree motif has its origin deeply rooted in ancient Near Eastern art and during the Iron Ages could be found in architectural decoration and in the ornamental arts, primarily ivory carvings (Barkay 1992: 317). First appearing in Iron Age II in Israel, over 35 capitals of this type have been found, making Object AA01-007 an acceptable fit for the dating of this motif. Taking its name from the Ionic order of classical Greece architecture, these capitals usually appear on buildings. While most of these capitals have been found in Israel, at least one comes from Medeibiyeh in Moab (Barkay 1992: 318). Proto-aeolic capitals typically have outward and downward curling spirals with a pointed center motif.<sup>2</sup> Typically, the pointed center motif is not very tall. It could be however, that Object AA01-007 chose to exaggerate the center motif for unknown reasons, or the artist could be creating the column design based on oral instruction or hearsay. Either way, it appears that the two columns flanking the two male figures are capped with palmettes, or proto-aeolic capitals.

Proto-aeolic (or proto-Ionic as they are sometimes called) capitals are often considered a trademark of royal Israelite architecture, and are known from all over Transjordan. The design of these capitals derives from stylized depictions of palm trees that reflect Phoenician motifs. Identified Iron Age sanctuaries and temples sites featuring proto-aeolic capitals have been found at Samaria, Megiddo, Hazor, Jerusalem, and Ramat

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<sup>2</sup> See Barkay's book section on the Iron Age II – III in Ben-Tor's volume, *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel* for a good illustration of palmette capitals (1992: fig. 9.14).

Rahel. These capitals have also appeared as a motif on contemporary ivories (Shiloh 1979: 33-35) (Figure 6.7).



Figure 6.7. A 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. Phoenician ivory carving from Nimrud showing palmette styled capitals (<https://www.bmimages.com/preview.asp?image=00032516001&imagex=2&searchnum=0001>).

It must also be mentioned that the freestanding columns depicted on some Iron Age model shrines have indirect parallels with the two columns at the entrance of the Solomon's temple in Jerusalem, which were also freestanding (1 Kings 7:21).

At Tall Jawa, a column fragment dating to the Iron Ages (Daviau 2002: fig. 2.42:1) hints that there may have been at least one model shrine at that site. Correspondingly, at the same site in a building yielding a variety of cultic artifacts was a miniature ceramic proto-aeolic capital (Daviau 2002: fig. 2.43:1), which may have been attached to a comparable column. According to Daviau, the director of Tall Jawa, these column and capital fragments, due to their fragmentary nature, cannot be conclusively determined to be part of a religious item (Daviau 2002: 51), but we can observe the

decorative attention paid the artifacts and conclude that the artisans who created them sought to beautify these objects and were selective in their treatment of each.

Interestingly, as far back as the Early Dynastic period in Egypt (3100-2686 B.C.E.), representations of two flags are found, which symbolized the entrances to sacred precincts (Keel 1997: 160). This attests that images of two flanking pillars at an entrance had a long and important history representing a sacred space. Likewise, in Syria the entrance to a sacred space was sometimes marked by two Asherah-pillars (Keel 1997: 160).

Did the pillars painted on the ‘Ataruz Architectural Model represent something similar? The model shrine from the Cypriot site of Idalion<sup>3</sup> (Figure 1.1) could shed some light on the possible function of flanking. The pillars on this particular shrine have been identified as representations of Asherah or Astarte and thus, are symbolic representations of deities (Keel 1997: 163-65). Could the columns painted on the front of the ‘Ataruz model represent a feminine counterpart to the two male figures?<sup>4</sup> As the model is missing key elements that might prove vital to a clear understanding of its overall meaning, these inferences can only be offered as an interesting possibility.

To the right of the column on the right-hand side of the façade it appears there may be another column with a decoration consisting of a chevron design meeting in the middle with an elongated diamond or lozenge shape containing a circle in the middle. Could this also have a deeper meaning, or simply indicate a decorated background? The

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<sup>3</sup> The Idalion Model Shrine dates from the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. and reflects both Oriental and Aegean influences (Nicolas 2013).

<sup>4</sup> For a more in depth exploration on the identification of freestanding pillars flanking a temple and model shrines, see Keel’s study in “The House of Yahweh” (1997: 151-63).

chevron design itself is reflective of Egyptian designs and may have trickled down through the Levant via Syria, or is a remnant of Egyptian influence from the Late Bronze Age (Ward 1970-72-73). However, according to William Ward, while this design motif was common in Egypt, the same design seemed to be universally used throughout the ancient world and thus one should be cautious about using such items to prove foreign connections and meanings (Ward 1970: 72-73).

The left side of the façade of Object AA01-007 is less clear. Vertical lines of the column can be detected however and the right-hand curl of the palmette capital is clearly visible indicating that the façade displayed matching palmette-capitaled columns.<sup>5</sup> The bottom of the façade consists of a slanted ledge that curves upward and outwards from the bottom. It is painted dark red and upon it rests the feet of the two male figures. The bottom ledge appears to have a painted vertical stripe design, at least on the outer edges. A dark brown line runs along the entire bottom edge of the stand. It is on this ledge that the feet of the two male figures rest.

### The Male Figures

Each male figure on the façade of Object AA01-007 wears a short, belted kilt that terminates at the upper thigh. Both kilts appear to have a painted stripe design, perhaps mimicking the pleats of fabric. While the clothing has obvious parallels to the Egyptian kilt, the closest contemporary and geographical parallel can be found on the Shihan Stele (Figure 6.8). This large basalt stele has been identified as Moabite and depicts a male

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<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 4 for more discussion on palmettes in relation to the palmette capitals on the Large Tall al-'Umayri Model Shrine.



Figure 6.8. The Shihan Stele (photo by the author).

warrior who has traditionally been labeled a king, prince, or even a warrior-god. He wears a short, pleated kilt similar in design to the kilts worn by the male figures on Object AA01-007.

Discovered in 1851 by Felicien de Saulcy, the stele was found at Redjom el A'abed, near Shihan, which is in the heart of Moabite territory. The archaeological context of the Shihan Stele remains unknown, but it has been dated between the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Ages (Claire 2013). The Shihan Stele attests to the presence of a particular type of clothing worn by men in Moabite territory during a time concurrent with the Iron Age IIA date given to Object AA01-007. The Egyptianization of the Shihan Stele has been discussed among scholars as well (Higginbotham 2000: 240-42), and the striking similarity to the male figures on Object AA01-007 could be an argument favoring Egyptian influence present within the iconography on the cult stand.

The kilts on the two male figures are held up by belts tied to the left and terminating with a fringed sash hanging down to a length that is slightly longer than the kilt itself. However, a proposal may be made that the sash hanging down the left-hand side of both kilts may not be a sash at all, but rather an Egyptianized form of a bull's tail. The reason for this theory is that the "sash" is longer than the kilt and ends in a fringed tassel. Could this possibly represent a tail? Usually these tails, which are depicted on Egyptian tomb reliefs, are only found on kings and indicated a sign of virility and strength. They typically hung down the back of the kilt, but artistic convention may have caused the 'Ataruz artisan to place the tail on the side of the kilt in order that it be seen since the figures are only to be viewed from the front. Examples showing a ruler wearing a bull's tail include the Narmer Palette and a Plaque from Abydos, both from the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty in Egypt (Yadin 1963: 124-25).

Artistic conventions where perspective was distorted were common in the ancient Near Eastern world and can usually be found in ancient Egypt where objects, accouterments, or even poses were altered to show the most important aspects of a design. A good example of altered perspective can be found in the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty tomb of Nebamun (Figure 6.9) where a pool in Nebamun's garden is portrayed as viewed from above. Birds, fish, and plants are in profile as we would normally expect. The trees however, are portrayed rather awkwardly with two sides of the pool acting as a base line on which the trees stand in order that they be shown in an acceptable way (James 1986: fig. 28).



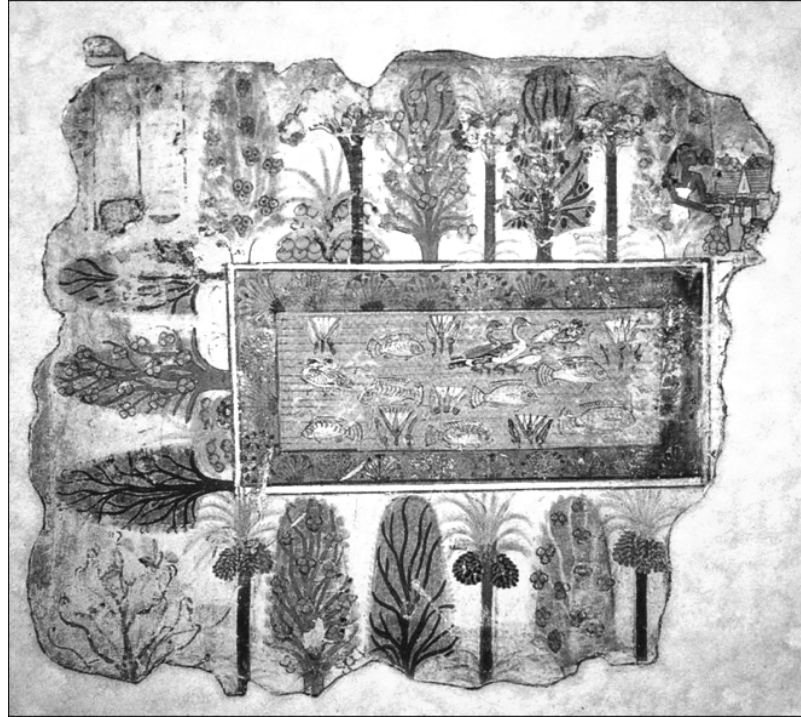


Figure 6.9. The Tomb of Nebamun pond in a garden scene showing altered perspective. ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%22Pond\\_in\\_a\\_Garden%22\\_\(fresco\\_from\\_the\\_Tomb\\_of\\_Nebamun.jpg\)](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%22Pond_in_a_Garden%22_(fresco_from_the_Tomb_of_Nebamun.jpg))).

Again, this did not indicate a lack of artistic eye on the part of the ancient artisan, but rather a symbolic convention developed in order to convey a specific meaning and to represent what was to be shown rationally rather than being visually correct (James 1986: 29). This again attests the function of a motif having more importance than portraying things realistically even in the exquisite art of the Egyptians. While it seems most likely that the male figures are simply wearing belts/sashes, the presence of a bull tail could convey a divine nature for the figures. Furthermore, the presence of so much bull iconography at ‘Ataruz indicates the likely worship of a god represented by a bull such as the Ba’al, El, or the storm god Hadad. Interestingly, the Bible describes bull worship among the Israelites (Exod 32; 1 Kgs 12:28).

On the right-facing side of each kilt there is something attached to the belt. It could possibly be the opening of a dagger or sword hilt that would have hung down and to the back of the wearer. All that is visible on each male figure's belt is an elongated ball of clay with a slight vertical slash in the middle indicating an empty sheath. Artistic conventions on palace reliefs demonstrate soldiers wearing swords and daggers at their side in their belts. A relief from the entrance of the King's Gate at Boghazköy shows a figure depicted in high relief wearing a short kilt with a sword hanging from his waist. The depiction may be of a god, warrior, or deified king (Yadin 1963: 222). The Ba'al Stele from Ugarit shows another male figure, likely a god, who also wears a short skirt with a short sword hanging from his waist (Yadin 1963: 223). Even though these examples come from the 14<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., they seem to depict the common way of carrying a sword in the ancient Near East. This idea is reinforced by the palace reliefs of Sargon (721-705 B.C.E.) from Khorsabad that depict the Assyrian army attacking Gaza. The soldiers are wearing sheathed swords at their waist (Yadin 1963: 422-23).

Each male figure on the façade of Object AA01-007 grasps a small animal. The significance of animals portrayed in ancient Near Eastern art is vitally important. Animals have been prolifically portrayed in art since the Prehistoric period indicating the intense value of animals in the ancient world.<sup>6</sup> Subsequently, animals developed strong iconographical meaning and when paired in combination with human figures, could reveal concepts of identity and duality.

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<sup>6</sup> The earliest known portrayals of animals come from cave paintings dating to the Prehistoric era. The most famous and well documented of these caves can be found in France and Spain, with the oldest art being attributed to the Cave of El Castillo, in northern Spain, with a given date of 40,000 years ago. The most commonly portrayed animals were bison, horses, aurochs, and deer (Hodgson 2013).

The Near Eastern conception of the world and that of our own were vastly different. A belief in the continuous interaction of the divine and human realms as mediated through symbol and iconography was standard (Keel 1997: 56). Concepts of duality in nature are evident in art dating all the way back to early Sumerian and pre-dynastic periods in Egyptian (Keel 1997: 47-56). Clearly, the two animals portrayed in combination with the male figurines have symbolic significance. Each animal is different and may therefore reflect the dual nature of man or the duality of divine elements working in the belief system of the residents of Iron Age 'Ataruz. While we do not have a key to all the elements, we can conclude a few things from the iconography.

The most important thing of note is that the size of the animals is significant. They appear to be fully grown and yet are very small in comparison with the male figures. The importance of a figure based on its size is evident in all artistic periods and civilizations of the ancient Near East. The smallness in the portrayal of the animals in comparison to the males holding them would immediately place them in the realm of submission (Azarpay *et al.* 1987: 183-213). In other words, the gods or human males on the 'Ataruz model had conquered or "tamed" chaos, or the enemy.

### **The Right-Hand Figure**

The right-hand figure is nearly completely intact. The head shows evidence of having been made in a mold and attached separately. The inside of the cult stand reveals a point of attachment of the head to the neck, thus we can assume that the head of the other male was also modeled from a mold. The face of the right-hand figure is round with a prominent aquiline nose. The large eyes are painted with a dark outline and a round pupil center. The mouth is indicated by a small vertical line and the entire face has a

similar appearance to that of model shrine Object AA01-029 (Figure 5.19). Encircling the face is a painted beard. Beards are known in the Levant from an orthostat located in the palace of 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. Kapara at Tell Halaf (Herzog and Gichon 1997: 137-38, 150, Yadin 1963: 362, 364, 365). Interestingly, the face seems to have similarities to iconographic details found on Philistine figurines (Ben-Shlomo 2010: 63-65). The treatment of many faces found on figurines discovered at confirmed Philistine sites possess rounded eyes, prominent noses, and straight mouths. In fact, there is enough of a similarity to the face of the right-hand figure to those faces on figurines found at Philistine sites to consider a knowledge of Philistine artistic style among artisans working in and around 'Ataruz during the Iron Age. The best examples come from Tell Yavneh where the many attached figures found on the cult stands attest a similar shape and style to the faces of the male figures found on Object AA07-001. Due to the large regional assemblage at Yavneh, the cult stands now serve as a diagnostic of the Philistines and their religion in the early Iron Age II period (Kletter, Ziffer and Zwickel 2006: 154).

The ears of the male figure are prominent and the top of the head reveals evidence of what was perhaps a hat or headdress that has since broken or eroded off as seen in the indented line above the eyes. On top of each ear is a rounded flap, much like the ear flaps depicted on a Late Bronze Age relief from the entrance of the King's Gate at Boghazköy (Yadin 1963: 222). In fact, both figures resemble the Boghazköy relief quite nicely as it shows a male figure wearing a short, belted kilt with a possible sash hanging down diagonally and an attached dagger in its sheath. Although the figure is bare chested, he wears a helmet with distinct ear flaps. While this relief predates the figures on Object

AA01-007 by several hundred years, it does show a long tradition of warfare dress that seemed to be common throughout the ancient Near East.

Both male figures on Object AA01-007 are covered in red paint with the kilts painted with dark brown vertical stripes indicating folds or pleats in the fabric. The belted sash may also have been painted a dark brown. Although faint, the right-hand figure reveals hints of having been painted with dark brown paint in order to show abdominal muscles, or, more likely, to show chest armor. The vertical and horizontal lines demonstrate this. A parallel can be found in model shrine AA01-039 (Figures 5.16 and 5.17), where the existing figure reveals possible shoulder straps consistent with the type of armor potentially being displayed here. Artistic portrayals of Canaanites, Israelites, Moabites, or Ammonites in armor are rare. The few depictions in existence show men wearing short skirts and what appears to be a short-sleeved shirt of some type (Yadin 1963: 362, 364-68). Perhaps this “shirt” was made of leather or was plated with metal. It is not known for sure, but depictions of Assyrian soldiers from the 10<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.E. show a short sleeved “shirt” that is often crisscrossed in front (Yadin 1963: 294). The right-hand figure of Object AA01-007 shows a similar treatment on the chest area, with crisscrossing bands over the chest that appear to wrap around the shoulders.

The feet of the right-hand figure may have been sandaled as well. Dark brown lines can be detected drawn up between the toes, but this is the only indication of footwear. The right ankle on the figure is missing and the left ankle is damaged, so no indication of an ankle strap can be seen. Therefore, we can only speculate as to the accurate appearance of the sandals. The toes on the feet of both figures are made with impressed lines and the feet are resting on the lower ledge of the façade.

In the left hand of the right-hand figure, which is hanging straight down by his side, he holds what appears to be a gazelle by one horn. However, according to the director of Khirbet ‘Ataruz, the right-hand figure holds a bull or calf (Ji 2012: 213). The reason for the bull identity is due to the proliferation of bull iconography that has been unearthed at ‘Ataruz. It is, however, this exact proliferation that makes the identity of the animal being grasped by the right-hand figure questionable. The iconography of other bull paraphernalia found at ‘Ataruz is distinctly different from how this particular animal on Object AA01-007 is portrayed. Some examples include a free-standing bull statue (Figure 6.10), a pithos surrounded by bas-relief bulls (Figure 6.11), and a bas-relief of a bull (Figure 6.12) found in 2012 that was modeled on the interior of the cistern serving



Figure 6.10. Ceramic bull statue found in the central courtyard of Field A (photo by Robert Bates).



Figure 6.11. One of the bulls modeled on the pithos found in the Main Sanctuary Room of Field A (photo by Robert Bates).

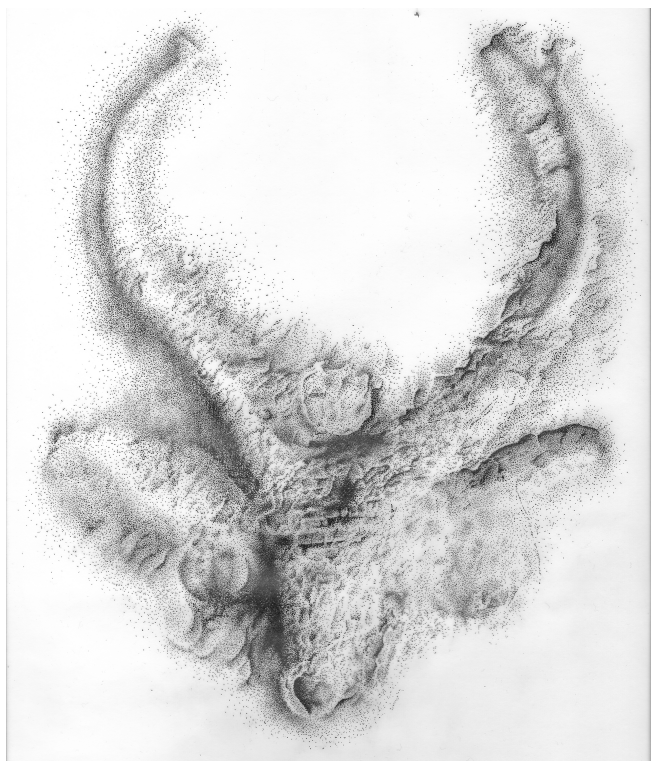


Figure 6.12. Drawing of a bull head that was found modeled on the interior wall within the cistern located in Field A of the Sanctuary Complex (drawing by the author).

the sanctuary complex of Field A. As seen in the illustrations, all the bull imagery found at 'Ataruz indicates a head with rounded horns extending upwards to form a circle much like the Egyptian Apis bull. The animal being grasped by the right-hand figure on the cult stand at 'Ataruz has distinctive upright horns that are more in line with that of either an Arabian oryx or gazelle (Figure 6.13).



Figure 6.13. The Arabian oryx, that is to this day a quintessential part of Jordanian wildlife, shows a striking resemblance to the animal held by the right-hand figure featured on Object AA01-007 (maverickbird.com).

All of the bull imagery from 'Ataruz depict an animal with wide, curving horns. This stylistic depiction of horns that seem to form a circle with their shape when viewed from straight on is similar in nearly all ancient Near Eastern bull imagery, whether the depictions are from Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Aegean or Anatolia (Stokstad and Cothren 2011). Examples include the famous Bull-Headed Lyre from the Royal Tombs of Ur (Stokstad and Cothren 2011: 35), depictions of the Apis Bull, found in nearly every dynasty in ancient Egypt (Stokstad and Cothren 2011: 52-53), the Minoan Bull-Headed Rhyton found in the Palace of Knossos on the island of Create (Stokstad and Cothren



2011: 89), and the Neolithic bull heads excavated from the famous site of Çatalhöyük (Stokstad and Cothren 2011: 15).

While the animal depicted on Object AA01-007 has a head shape more consistent with Near Eastern portrayals of gazelles with the horns are pointing straight up and small pointed ears, the eyes are bulging and a small protrusion under the neck could indicate the trademark dewlap under the neck, which is characteristic of the Zebu bull (Figure 6.14), a particular breed of cattle that is prolifically illustrated in Iron Age depictions of



Figure 6.14. Zebu bull (Agricultural Resource Service).

bulls throughout ancient Egypt, Palestine, and Jordan. Originating in the Indian Subcontinent, they would have been the common cattle of the day. They have a unique appearance characterized by a fatty hump on their shoulders, drooping ears and a large dewlap. (Van Vuure 2005). However, the horns in these images do not typically point straight up. The bull imagery at ‘Ataruz is similar to other illustrations of the Zebu bull in ancient Near Eastern art, but the animal grasped here is different and does not share the qualities otherwise portrayed in the bulls represented at ‘Ataruz.

Depictions of bulls are not always easy to distinguish. The most common attribute acting as an identifying marker is a triangular pattern of grooves that are often positioned between the eyes or lower down on the muzzle. Sometimes these grooves continue upward to form brows over the eyes (Daviau 2002: 77). The animal on Object AA01-007 referred to as a bull by Ji is missing these identifiers. However, the presence of the bulging eyes and potential dewlap must allow for at least a possibility of the creature being a bull.

The significance of either a bull or a gazelle could drastically alter the meaning of the iconography as each animal had its own symbolic attributes that in combination with other animals and figures, that could alter meaning even further. Bulls have a highly complex and long history of symbolic meaning in the ancient Near East and were a very important part of the visual and religious vocabulary from at least the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium B.C.E. (Kletter, Ziffer and Zwickel 2006: 152). Bull figures and depictions of them have been found in the Mesopotamian cultures, Cyprus, Ugarit, and Syria as well as throughout the Levant (Mazar 1982: 29). Bulls were also associated with storm gods, such as Teshub in Anatolia and Ba'al, or El, in Syria (Mazar 1982: 152). However, bulls also often appeared in combination with naked female figures and could represent aspects of female goddesses (Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 20).

In Egypt, there are numerous inscriptions and artistic depictions on temples and tomb walls celebrating the fearful admiration and inspired adoration of bulls. A potent source of procreative life and royal power, the Egyptian king was often portrayed as a raging bull overthrowing his enemies (Wilkinson 1992: 57). The Bible speaks prolifically of the cultic use concerning bulls and other bovines and also used the bull

metaphor in descriptions of both power and corruption. Exodus 32:4-8 speaks of the golden calf created by Aaron to appease the wishes of the Israelites, while Numbers 23:22 describes God's protection for the Israelites as, "like the horns of the wild ox."

The importance of the bull motif in Transjordan is illustrated in numerous examples that show the bull as an entity of cult, both by itself and as a symbol of the Semitic storm god Hadad or Ba'al (Mazar 1982: 30-32). The resulting conclusions have contributed to the debate surrounding exact meaning behind the iconography of bulls in the Iron Age Levant ranging from a simple votive offering, symbolizing the strength of the god, an emblematic depiction of the god itself, or as a symbol of the forces of nature or danger of the enemy.

The presence of a bull grasped in the hand of a male figure on the 'Ataruz model could indicate victory over nature or the enemy. It could also symbolize a foreign or domestic power. The fact that the male holding the animal has no discernable identifying attributes could indicate that the animal itself serves to indicate meaning; the male figure could be a local ruler or local god.

The gazelle on the other hand, could symbolize beauty<sup>7</sup> as well as indicating the success of the hunter over the hunted. In the ancient world, hunters were adult males whose success in hunting indicated success in life and as gazelles were a known food source in the Levant, they therefore stood as a symbol for heroic huntsmanship. (Porada 1990: 75). Often paired as being conquered by the lion, the gazelle also held astrological symbolism. Since the beginnings of history celestial bodies were closely observed, studied, and interpreted. During the month of February, it was understood that the

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<sup>7</sup> See Song of Solomon 2: 9-17.

constellation of the deer (*Cassiope*) was beginning its helical setting and would remain invisible until after forty days when it would begin to rise again. Simultaneous to the setting of *Cassiope* (and also the constellation of the bull *Taurus*) was the helical rising of *Leo*. This particular phenomenon was of extreme importance to an agricultural society as it marked the time of year that the ground was to be plowed, worked, and sowed with grain (Ettinghausen and Hartner 1964: 162-63). If the animal being grasped by the right-hand figure is indeed a gazelle, attributes associated with control over nature and the ability to feed the family and community could be a possibility. As gazelles were not known to represent power or kingship, the possibility that of the animal representing a divine figure should be ruled out. The male grasping the gazelle would then represent something or someone other than a local ruler.

Nevertheless, one cannot rule out the possibility that the animal being held might be a representation of a bull. The argument for the bull is strong based on the presence of bull iconography at 'Ataruz and very few representations of caprids. However, the shape of the horns is a telling indicator and leans to the conclusion that the animal being grasped is more likely to be a gazelle. As the site of Khirbet 'Ataruz is still under excavation the debate over the possibilities cannot be closed as yet.

Both animals being grasped appear to be the size one would expect of a very young animal. However, this is unlikely as it was common to depict a fully-grown animal much smaller than the figure holding it in order to exhibit man's domination over beast or as was previously mentioned, to demonstrate the taming of "chaos." (Frankfort 1996: 367-68). Called hierarchical scale, this seems to be the case here as both animals appear to be fully grown even though they are pictured small. This disproportionate size

difference was common in Egypt and Mesopotamia. A classic depiction of man over beast in can be seen in the alabaster relief panels from Sargon's palace at Khorsabad where the main entrance to the throne room reveals a carved depiction of a man grasping what initially appears to be a lion cub. However, the developed neck ruff indicates a fully grown lion. (Frankfort 1996: fig. 168) (Figure 6.15). Parallels for the use of hierarchical



Figure 6.15. A hero figure holding a fully-grown lion. From the Louvre (photo by the author).

scale with zoomorphic and anamorphic figures can be found on other model shrines and cult stands from the Levant as well. The elaborately decorated model shrine attributed to the Transjordan region (Figure 3.22) is exceptionally rich in iconography. The model features two female figures standing as caryatids on either side of the shrine opening, with two seated guardian lions resting beside each female. The guardian lions are

decidedly smaller than a full-grown lion would be (Maeir and Dayagi-Mendels 2007: fig. 1).

The right arm of the right-hand facing figure from Object AA01-007 is bent upwards at the elbow and rests on a pillar or altar. In his right hand, he grasps a dagger held upwards. The dagger shape is deeply incised into the clay indicating the possibility that it may have once been inlaid, perhaps with metal. The fact that the dagger is being displayed may explain the empty sheath attached to the belt and alludes to the fate of the poor creature being grasped in the other hand.

### **The Left-Hand Figure**

The left-hand facing figure is slightly larger than the other, with broader shoulders, a wider torso, and thicker legs. The head of this figure is missing and part of the left leg is gone. Like the right-hand figure, this figure is wearing the belted kilt with a sash and empty dagger sheath. However, the kilt on this figure appears to be shorter, ending approximately at the crotch. This skirt reveals clearly painted stripes in dark brown and the empty sheath is more pronounced.

The feet of the left-hand figure appear to be bare unlike that of his counterpart, although the paint indicating sandals could easily have worn off. The area of the torso has been damaged by burn marks, thus it is impossible at this time to conclude whether or not painted lines on the chest indicate armor or abdominals like the right-hand figure. Because both men wear the same belted kilt, however, it can be assumed that they had the same torso treatment as well.

Both arms of the left-hand figure are held down to the side, but the right hand grasps what appears to be a struggling lion. The head is obscured by the man's grasping

hand, but the animal is shown in profile and reveals the pose of a leonine figure.

However, the truncated tail with no bushy terminus, common in depicted lion imagery in the ancient Near East,<sup>8</sup> causes a consideration for other possible animals such as a sheep. Whichever animal it is portraying, the hind legs are bent and the blunted tail is hanging straight back. The forelegs seem to be bent at the elbow with the paws or hooves of the right legs resting on the right side of the man's kilt.

Like the animal held by the right-hand figure, the question as to exactly what type of animal these male figures are holding is significant and will be addressed presently. As it clearly is shown by the right-hand figure, at least one of the animals is intended to be a sacrifice. The fact that there is a pillar terminating at waist height to both male figures (12.5 cm in height), with evidence of a slight platform on top of the pillar combined with the upward held dagger grasped in the hand of the right-hand figure, leaves little doubt as to the intention of the man's actions and the purpose of the animal he is grasping. Based upon this depiction, it seems clear to conclude that the pillar between the two male figures is indeed an altar. According to Benjamin Sass, iconographic scenes involving two worshippers facing each other with an altar or another object between them is considered to be characteristically Transjordanian, with the tradition beginning in the Bronze Age and continuing through the Iron Age<sup>9</sup> (Sass 1993: 196).

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<sup>8</sup> See the Ta'anach cult stands (Strawn 2005: fig. 3.77, 3.78), an electron pendant from Tel Mique-Ekron (fig. 3.84), a bulla from Samaria (fig. 3.93), a seal from Ramat Rahel (fig. 3.94), a seal from Hazor (fig. 3.95) a seal of Shema, the servant of Jeroboam (fig. 3.96), a terracotta lion from Hebron (fig. 3.101), and a seal impression from Tel Dan (fig. 3.102).

<sup>9</sup> The tradition of mirroring figures facing a central object can be traced back to Mesopotamia. Mariana Giovino discusses the sacred tree and all its variations as a central motif which is flanked by male figures or composite creatures in his book, *The Assyrian Sacred Tree* (Giovino 2007).

Examples that parallel this imagery come primarily from seals. From Amman come two cylinder seals dating to the Late Bronze Age I-IIA (Eggler and Keel 2006: 55, objs. 81 and 84). Both seals show two men facing a palmette, or some kind of stand. Another Late Bronze Age I-IIA cylinder seal from Dschabal al-Hawayah shows the early tradition of depicting two male figures side by side. This time nothing appears to be between them, but they are flanked on either side by tall palm fronds which could be an early indicator of what would eventually develop into the palmette capitaled column; similar to the columns that appear on either side of the male figures on Object AA01-007.

From Khirbat al-Hadschschar, located between Wadi as-Sir and Na'ur; about 10 km southwest of Amman, comes an Iron Age I bronze stamp ring depicting two skirted male figures facing what appears to be an ankh symbol (Eggler and Keel 2006: 117, obj. 4). An Iron Age IIB scaraboid from Abu Nuseir (Eggler and Keel 2006: 3, obj.1) displays two men wearing what appear to be pleated skirts. Between them is a palm frond or a ribbed column with a palmette capital. Another Iron Age I stamp seal, this one from Tall al-'Umayri (Eggler and Keel 2006: 335, obj. 40), shows two stylized men with a crescent shape between their heads. From Salt comes a scaraboid dating to Iron Age IIC (Eggler and Keel 2006: 277, obj. 5). It depicts two men facing what may be a type of cult stand or plant. These examples serve to demonstrate that Sass may be correct in his assumptions that dual male figures accompanied by a central symbol or object seem to proliferate the Transjordan region from the Late Bronze Age through the Iron Ages. While the only examples available thus far are seals, the iconographic motif is clear, and it can be concluded that this motif may have been easily adopted onto other objects such as architectural models.



Returning to the animal being grasped, the right-hand of the male holds what some have initially called a leonine figure. This creature is another enigma as it shows significant deterioration, preventing the main attributes of a lion from being clear. Depictions of lions throughout the ancient Near East show similar compositions. The mouth is usually open and gaping with the tongue hanging out and the tail curled up over the back or curled up over the side.<sup>10</sup> If the 'Ataruz depiction is that of a leonine creature, several anomalies are apparent, with the most noticeable being the placement of the tail. It is hanging downward and there is no evidence of a tuft at the end. The head is another problem. Degradation has left the few scholars who have looked at it, puzzled. While it seems to have a rounded ruff around the head, it cannot be determined if this is a representation of a mane, or if it just damaged. No evidence of an open mouth can be determined due to the left-hand figure's hand grasping the animal around the face. Further analysis will need to take place in order to make a more confident determination, but in the meantime, it will continue to be called leonine as it does seem to possess an overall feline look to it.

Lion imagery is exceedingly complex and there is much historical information. Spanning thousands of miles, numerous cultures and languages, and several millennia make it difficult to succinctly sum up historic lion imagery in a few examples (Strawn 2005: 131). Nevertheless, the main issues of lion symbolism will be addressed as it pertains to the Iron Age in the Levant.

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<sup>10</sup> Alternately, lions from Egypt are depicted with mouths both open and shut with the tail both over the back and hanging down (Wilkinson 1992: 69). Some lions from Mesopotamia also show the tail hanging down (Strawn 2005: Fig. 2.3, Fig. 4.9, Fig. 4.20, Fig. 4.30, Fig. 4.56), and examples from Palestine also show the tail in alternate positions (Strawn 2005: Fig. 3.13, Fig. 3.28, Fig. 3.82).

From the earliest of times demons or negative powers have been portrayed in the form of lions (Keel 1997: 85) and the enemies of David are repeatedly compared to lions in the Book of Psalms.<sup>11</sup> Thus, lions quickly became the symbol of power, terror, danger, and the enemy. Ironically, the lion was also admired for the very fearful powers that drove people to beg the gods for protection. The lion, like the bull, became a symbol of kingship and victory over rivals (Keel 1997: 85-6). Kingship as represented by the strength of the lion is a very ancient theme in Near Eastern art, appearing as early as 5,000 B.C.E. (Collon 1995: 219). Like the previously mentioned theme of duality, lions could manifest variant personalities that are confirmed in the Bible. Positive qualities of the lion are referred to in Genesis 49 where the tribe of Judah is compared to a lion because of its strength, courage, and ferocity when taking the Promised Land from the Canaanites.

The lion was also a patron animal to the goddess Ishtar and later came to represent the Phoenician Canaanite goddess Anat-Astarte (Strawn 2005: 95-96). A 12<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. cult stand from Beth-Shean also confirms this. In spite of its fragmentary nature, the cult stand displays various human figures as well as snakes and a lion. The long attested visual connection between the lion and a goddess permits one to identify figures on architectural models as females (goddesses) because the lion, “belongs exclusively to the sphere of the goddess” (Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 86). As mentioned before, the Ta’anach Cult Stand (DeVries 1987: 37) (Figure 9), dating to the 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., also depicts female deities with lions, further attesting this connection of lions with the divine. However, by the beginning of Iron Age II there was a decline in

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<sup>11</sup> See Psalms 7:2, 10: 9-10, 17:12 for references to lions.

portrayals of goddesses with lions or otherwise (DeVries 1987: 37). According to Keel and Uelinger, “no female deities are depicted in Palestinian glyptic art during Iron Age IIB” (Keel and Uelinger 1998: 186). Since this is immediately after the date suggested for Object AA01-007, could it be plausible that a lion figure would also appear with a man? The fact that the male is grasping the animal by the neck or head could be seen as a depiction of victory over chaos or the ability of man to overcome danger and subdue it.

Portrayals of a king or hero controlling a lion are attested in Mesopotamian art as well, reaching the height of symbolic power during the Assyrian Empire (Strawn 2005: 187-88). The magnificent example previously mentioned is the high-relief statue of a hero figure from Khorsabad (Figure 108). Dating to the time of the Neo-Assyrian Empire (721-705 B.C.E.), it depicts a hero (perhaps Gilgamesh) over five meters high holding a small lion around the neck. The lion is fully grown as evidenced by its full mane, but is depicted as small and powerless, much like the portrayal seen on Object AA01-007. Like the bull being held by the right-hand figure, one can also deduce a similar meaning pertaining to the left-hand figure holding the leonine creature. The lion being held by the left-hand figure of Object AA01-007, could act as a representative symbol of a local ruler or a local god that has been subdued by the forces of ‘Ataruz, or the Moab region in general.

Another possibility is that the animal being held by the left-hand figure is a sheep. A sheep would be considered a worthy sacrifice. The Bible tells us that Mesha raised sheep. “Now Mesha king of Moab was a sheep breeder, and used to pay the king of Israel 100,000 lambs and the wool of 100,000 rams” (2 Kgs 3:4). Sheep were and still are common to Transjordan and it would be, therefore, not unexpected to find this important

resource being depicted on any artwork during the Iron Age. The depiction of a sheep would also be in harmony with the proposed narrative of the scene that seems to show two men offering up animals to be sacrificed on the altar between them. As sheep did not represent divinity we could conclude that the left-hand figure was, at the least, not emblematic of a god, but rather of a local king, leader, or representative.

If, however, the animal being held is a lion, then the left-hand figure must be reconsidered. As far as is known, lions were never sacrificed upon an altar and there is no evidence either archaeologically or textually of this having been a common practice in Transjordan. A possible exception to this might be argued from the lion hunting panels found in the Neo-Assyrian Empire where in the palace relief panels of Ashurbanipal, depictions show killed lions being brought in procession to be offered before the gods and king. However, the lions are already dead and are not shown lain upon an altar but rather are placed in front of one (Strawn 2005: fig. 4.129). The Assyrian lions of Ashurbanipal's hunt are full size too, as the panels are likely commemorating an actual event.

If the left-hand figure is indeed holding a lion, then the figure could represent not only a local lord or king, but a divine figure in some way, as lions were commonly associated with divinity and kingship in the ancient Near East (Strawn 2005: 131-32). However, there is no other iconography present that might infer an association with a god.

The uniqueness in the portrayal of two male figures holding sacrificial animals is not unusual in ancient Near Eastern iconography, but they are unique to architectural models. No known parallels demonstrating male figures grasping animals on architectural

models currently exist anywhere in the Levant. Future excavations may change this of course.

Who are these male figures on Object AA01-007? Are they depictions of local gods, or are they depictions of humans? As early as 1885, Georges Perrot distinguished the differences between anthropomorphic figures that were depicting humans from those depicting deities based on the presence or absence of divine symbols on the figures themselves (Chipiez and Perrot 1885: 264). As the two male figures flanking the front of Object AA01-007 have no distinguishing iconography that can be identified with that of a deity, we cannot rule out the possibility that the two figures may indeed represent mortal humans.

The skin on both males has been painted in a dark red slip. A speculation could be made in light of the fact that in Egyptian art, men were typically depicted with dark red skin to differentiate them from the paler, yellow skin of woman. This difference served as a symbolic indicator that a successful man was a hard worker, and regardless of his profession he was shown with the sun-burnt, reddened skin of one who toils the earth to provide for his family.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps the presence of red-slipped skin could be another indicator that the male figures are human rather than divine. Because both a gazelle or bull would make for an ideal sacrifice, it could be proposed that the right-hand figure may represent a priest.

The fact that the two male figures are standing in the main opening on the façade of the stand also demonstrates that perhaps they are guardians to the space within. Keel

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<sup>12</sup> For a complete analysis of the symbolism of skin color in Egyptian art, primarily around the time of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, which precedes the Iron Age dating of the ‘Ataruz Cult Stand, see Cheal’s thorough study of ethnic identity in relation to skin color (Cheal 2004: 47-69).

and Uelinger discuss the plausible thesis that if entrances to model shrines or cult stands are flanked or filled with figures, then those figures represent guardians (Keel and Uelinger 1998: 158). Pirhiya Beck states that when columns are illustrated on side walls with human and animal imagery in between them, they may represent a columned portico and a *cella* where cult images were deposited (Beck 2002: 411, 418). If this is the case, Object AA01-007 could be the representation of a holy structure being guarded by two priests or representatives of the gods.

### The Remaining Sides

It is clear from the façade that Object AA01-007 had two stories, or rather gave the impression of a structure with two levels. Above the heads of the two male figures a long horizontal slab of clay was applied to create a divider, creating the illusion of a second story. The front of the second story, which is missing, shows evidence of an opening filled with figures as well. The remains of four animal feet that appear to be free standing fill the bottom of the opening (Figure 6.16). Speculation about the feet being

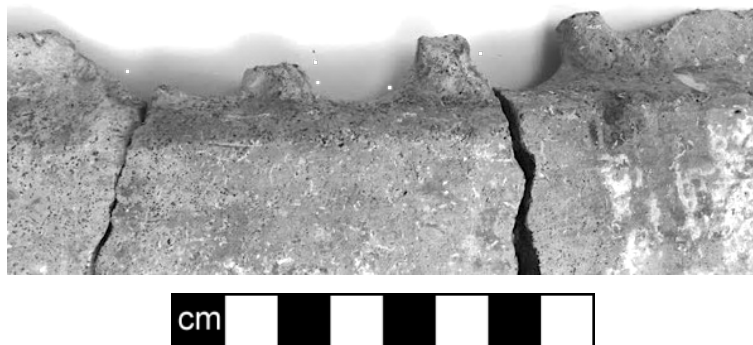


Figure 6.16. The opening in the second story showing the remains of animal feet (photo by the author).

either hooves or paws is still under debate. The shape has a clear hoof appearance, but closer inspection reveals the presents of multiple “toes” on at least one of the feet. Thus,

the conclusion proposed here is that these are paws to a striding lion or a griffin, which fits in nicely with ancient Near Eastern iconography. In addition to several ivory plaques (Figure 6.17), many of the iconographic parallels to this motif can be found on cylinder



Figure 6.17. A striding griffin appears on this openwork ivory plaque from Nimrud, ca. 9<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. (<https://www.tumblr.com/search/ivory%20plaque>).

seals dating to the period of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires, c. 1000-500 B.C.E. Striding griffins can be found on a cylinder seal from Arslan Tash, Syria (Collon 2005: fig. 386), and from Urartu (Collon 2005: fig. 399), as well as a striding lion from Urartu (Collon 2005: fig. 401). A striding griffin also appears on an Edomite bulla from Umm el-Biyara (Lemaire 1993: fig.6). Another good example of a striding lion can be found on an Ammonite scarab currently housed at the British Museum (Lemaire 1993: fig. 26).

Object AA01-007 was meant to be seen in the round. All four sides of the cult stand are decorated with painted patterns and possible animal motifs. On both sides flanking the façade are square-shaped openings about 8.5 cm in width and length, resembling windows. The corners are rounded and they have been placed in the middle

and directly under the slab of clay that wraps around the entire stand separating the “stories.”

The right-hand side of the stand is the best preserved (Figure 6.18). On the lower



Figure 6.18. The lower right-hand side showing a cut out for a “window” (photo by the author).

register or “first floor,” a window was cut about 12.5 cm from the base. There is an obvious painted design on what remains of the wall with at least two discernable paint colors of dark brown and dark red.

Most of the lower register is smoke-damaged so it is difficult to make out the design, but it appears to be a purposeful one perhaps depicting a scene that would have been recognizable or familiar to the intended viewers. Further analysis will need to be conducted before a firmer conclusion about the depicted scene can be proclaimed.

Above the molding that divides the stand into two stories is a painted design depicting a bird with extended wings (Figure 6.19). Painted in dark red, the bird is facing





Figure 6.19. Detail of the proposed pintail duck on the upper right-hand side of the stand (photo by the author).

right and has both wings extended out. The forward-facing wing is lower than the rear-facing wing, and the bird's feet rest on the top of the molding. The bird's head and neck are covered with spots that may serve to identify the species being depicted. Based on the stance of the bird, the shape of the head, and the spots, a possible candidate is the female pintail duck, which are spotted, much like the portrayal on the stand. The portrayal of the duck also resembles the various Egyptian hieroglyphic signs for pintail duck (Gardner 1994: 471-72, G.39, G.40, G.41). Because birds were part of the familiar natural

environment, they may have been adapted into the religious iconography of Transjordan much like the Egyptians did.<sup>13</sup>

The left-hand side of the stand (Figure 6.20) is even more obscured than the right-



Figure 6.20. The lower left-hand side of the stand (photo by the author).

hand side, and yet another obvious design or scene can be detected. White encrustations and overall fading prevent the current identification of subject matter however, and all that can be done is to speculate that another narrative scene was likely portrayed here. The cut-out window is in the same location and is of the same size as the opening on the opposite side.

The rear wall of the cult stand (Figure 6.21) is nearly completely obscured with smoke damage and encrustations, but a distinct pattern consisting of outlined boxes filled with dark red dots is clear on the bottom half. The interiors of these boxes were painted with a creamy white slip before the dots were applied. While this motif likely had

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<sup>13</sup> In ancient Egypt, many birds were revered for their association with deities and depictions of them appear in statues, on temples and tomb reliefs, as well as on amulets (ed. Bailleul-LeSuer 2012: 177).

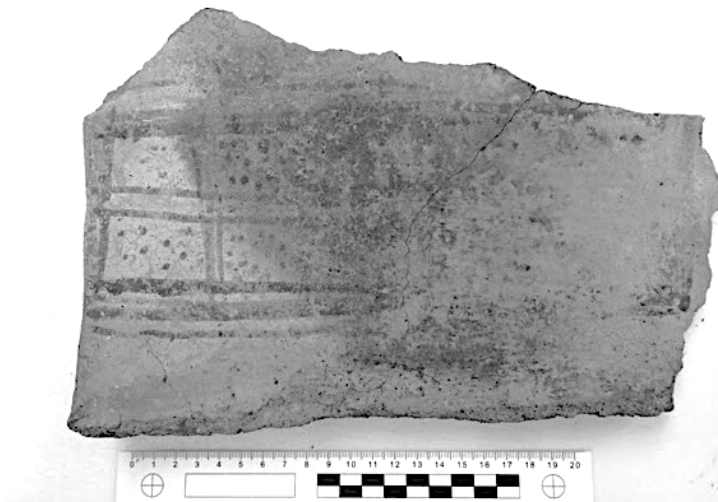


Figure 6.21. The rear wall of the stand (photo by the author).

meaning just as the painted designs on the other remaining walls, it too is unclear and would be complete speculation to guess at the intended message at this point.

Much is missing from Object AA01-007 above the slab dividing the stand into two stories except for the right-hand side, so it is difficult to tell whether or not there were more openings carved into it. The only opening we know for sure is above the façade where, as previously mentioned, another wide opening can be detected containing the feet of a sculpted animal (Figure 6.16). One can assume that this animal filled an opening which may have been much the same size, at least in width, as the opening in which the two male figures stand in the lower register. One can speculate that perhaps the animal, located on the right side of the façade and striding to the left, may have been mirrored by another animal on the left-hand side of the opening. The missing iconography may well have indicated a clearer picture as to what or who this cult stand was for.

## The Four-Horned Altar

It is now known that the four-horned altar (Figure 6.2), which was previously thought to be a separate object, belongs to the top of Object AA01-007. There is a molding around the top portion of the cult stand, which is similar to the molding midway up the stand that divides the structure into two registers or stories. The molding is about 6 cm in height and projects outward about 2.5 cm at the corners. Directly above this molding on each corner, are what appear to be horns. They project upward about 5.5 cm from the molding. Each horn is gracefully curved and the profile can be paralleled with several examples of four-horned altars found in the Levant. Originally, all four horns of AA01-007 were identified (see Figure 6.2). However, since excavation, one of the horns has gone missing and all attempts to locate it thus far have failed.

During the Iron Age, one of the most important cult items throughout the Levant was the four-horned altar (Golden 2004: 189). Commonly made of stone, four-horned altars are attested in the Bible (Lev 4:7, 18, 25) and appear to have served the purposes of animal sacrifice and incense burning. According to the Bible, the four corners point to the four directions on a compass (Exodus 27:1-2), and the altar was likely used as an object upon which to sacrifice animals (Elitzur and Nir-Zevi 2004: 34). A rock-hewed altar carved out of limestone was discovered about a mile from Shiloh, with another example originally found at Beer-Sheva. Consisting of three large carved stones appearing to be the three corners of a massive four-horned altar, the Beer-Sheva sacrificial altar was likely dismantled during the religious reforms of Hezekiah in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. (Sharp 2015: 28). Several Iron Age II stone four-horned altars were also discovered at

Tell es-Safi (Maeir 2012: 35), Miqne (Eitam 2015) (Figure 6.22), Biblical Ekron (Zevit 2001: 139).



Figure 6.22. Assemblage of four-horned incense altars from Tell Miqne, Stratum IB destruction, last quarter of 7<sup>th</sup> century (<http://www.aiar.org/tel-miqne-ekron-excavations-gallery/>).

The horn was also related to the longstanding Canaanite bull motif that conveyed strength and security (Golden 2004: 189). According to the Bible, horned altars were also created for the Tent of Congregation, and later were made for Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. According to I Kings 1:50, these altars were used by those who sought safety. By fleeing to the temple and grasping the horns, they were protected.

While stone altars were common, clay altars were rare, or rather, clay altars have not survived as well as their stone counterparts. Conversely, Syrian horned altars (Figure 6.23) were known to be made of clay rather than stone (Hitchcock 2002: 237). Exhibiting openings that resemble windows, the horns are more suggestive of architectural elements. It is in this tradition that the Large 'Ataruz Cult Stand falls. Cult stands that consist of a tall body with multiple fenestrations, decorative elements, and a flat or cupped roof tipped by four "horns" seem to follow a Syrian tradition where the closest parallels are

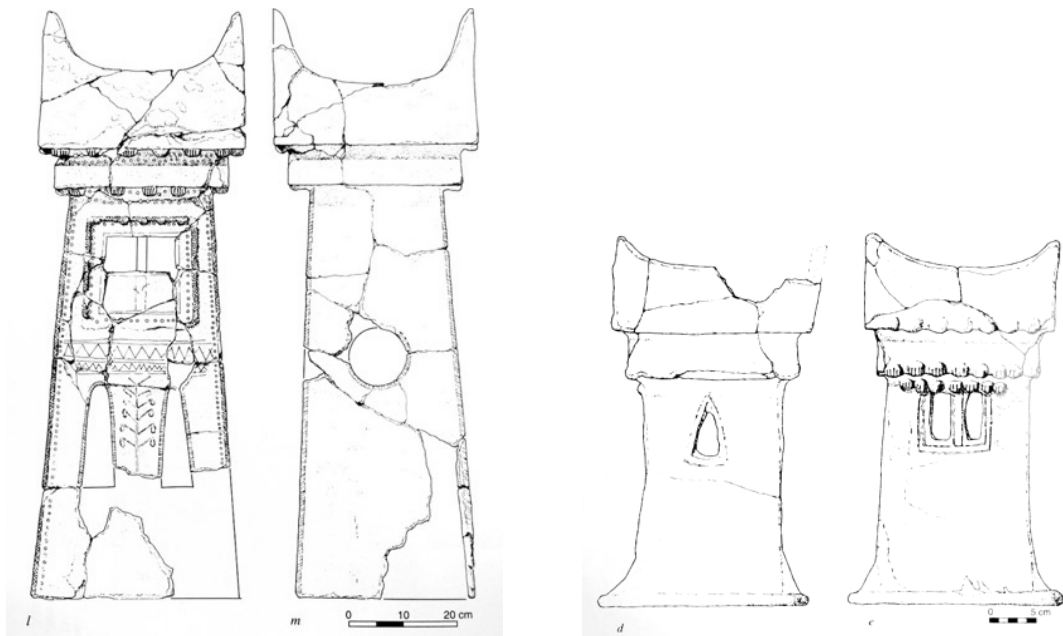


Figure 6.23. Clay horned cult stands from Tell Emar (Muller 2002: fig. 55, 60).

found with the Late Bronze Age cult stands from Tell Meskene (Muller 2002: figs. 55, 60, 71, 86, 87, and 88), and Mumbaqa (Muller 2002: fig. 116, 117, and 118). In Israel, a horned clay altar (CS46) was found in the ‘Temple Hill’ Repository Pit at Yavneh (Kletter, Ziffer, and Zwickel 2010: pl. 70). Another four-horned clay altar found at Tell Yavneh and dating to the time of the Philistines (around 800 B.C.E.) is a near replica of stone altars found at other sites in Palestine (Kletter, Ziffer and Zwickel 2010: pl. 162, 163). At Hazor, a low four-horned altar dating to the 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. (Stratum X) was found (Ben Tor *et al* 2012: 63, photo 2.16). In Jordan, the closest parallel is the previously-mentioned cult stand excavated at Pella (Potts and Smith 1992: pl.70, Muller 2002: fig. 154). The Pella stand (Figure 6.4) has a similar shape to the ‘Ataruz stand, but is not quite as tall. The “roof” of the Pella altar is flat and is tipped by four little horns and is incised with palm branches. There is no painted decoration that can be detected.

However, it is at Tel Rehov (Figure 6.24) that the closest cult stand parallels in

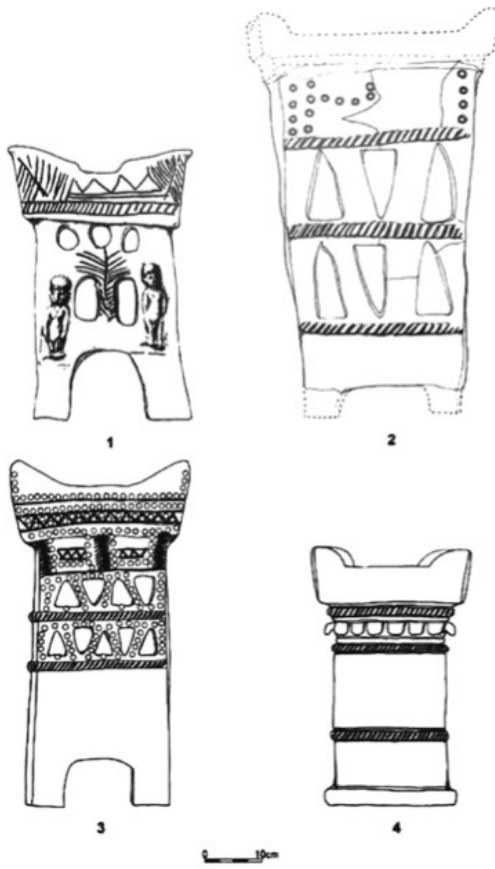


Figure 6.24. Tell Rehov cult stands (Mazar 2015: fig. 3).

date and style, that were identified in controlled excavations, can be found in relation to the Large ‘Ataruz Cult Stand. According to Amihai Mazar, clay altars were particularly common during Iron Age IIA at Tell Rehov (Mazar 2015: 32). Four complete or almost complete clay altars and the fragments of approximately 30 additional altars were found in various contexts in the Iron Age IIA layers at Rehov, with many of them coming from the local open-air sanctuary complex in Area E (Mazar 2015: 30). This open-air sanctuary complex is paralleled with the sanctuary complex at ‘Ataruz due to not only time period, but to similar components such as standing stones and platforms.

What does it mean then, to have a large clay cult stand that functioned as an altar? According to Aharoni, altars are always associated with temples (Hitchcock 2002: 241).

And yet Amihai Mazar states that the more prevalent view is that such stands could have been used in home rituals where they represented a specific location, a deity, or acted as a container for the divine (Mazar 2015: 38). Either way, it is clear that they served a religious function where sacrifice or offering was part of the ritual associated with it.

Each horn of Object AA01-007 has been treated with a distinctive “checkerboard” pattern (Figure 6.25), which seems to have been painted with at least three colors. A



Figure 6.25. The “checkerboard” treatment on Object AA01-007 (photo by the author).

nearly identical checkerboard pattern, also with three colors, in this case red, black, and yellow, can be found in the Egyptian 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty tomb of Sennefer (TT96) (Figure 6.26). While checkerboard patterns are attested in various types of ancient Near Eastern imagery, it is at Megiddo that we find a good comparison with a cult stand. The Megiddo stand is a squared cult stand (Muller 2002: 150-51, fig. 146) possessing a vertical checkered pattern that seems to be used as a divider (Figure 6.27).





Figure 6.26: The interior of the tomb of Sennefer showing the “checkboard ceiling treatment (photo by the author).

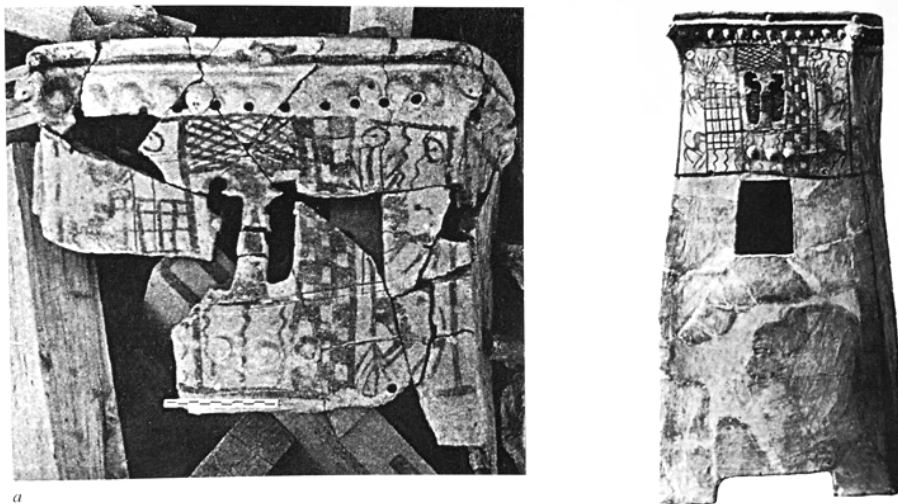


Figure 6.27. Megiddo cult stand showing a checkerboard pattern (Muller 2002: fig. 146).

The “checkerboard” pattern is one of the most common motifs that is frequently used for ornamentation. It falls into a category known as geometric motifs which are typically repetitive, stylistic marks made up of lines, both curved and straight, dots, circles, lozenges, and squares that seem to have no other meaning other than being aesthetic (Choi 2016: 131). However, for decades scholars like Frankfort have stated that some geometric designs could have symbolic or even magical meaning (Frankfort 1924:

16). While this is always a possibility, it seems a problematic hypothesis to make as inserting symbolism into abstracted designs is pure conjecture. In addition to being a favorite decorative motif of the Egyptians, these geometric designs appear frequently on Canaanite pottery in particular (Choi 2016) and exhibit many variations on the same theme.

Checkered patterns are not the only geometric motifs to appear on the stand. The horns on AA01-007 are connected by ceramic “bars” on all four sides that are painted with an inverted V-shaped design (Figure 6.28). This inverted, or reversed V-shaped



Figure 6.28. The inverted V- design on the sides of the top of the Large ‘Ataruz Cult Stand (photo by the author).

design is the most common triangular motif found in the ancient Near East with some of the best examples coming from Canaanite pottery (Choi 2016: 143-45) as well as from Egypt.

The very top of AA01-007 consists of a concave bowl shape that fits between the horns and appears to have been painted white. Most of the paint or plaster has flaked off, but the edges are distinct. As AA01-007 has been identified as a cult stand, it stands to reason that incense or burnt offerings were placed within this basin. However, no

indication of burning has been detected. This does not mean that burning did not take place, however. Often, small bowls were placed onto the tops of cult stands and it was within these bowls that offerings, oils, or burning incense was placed. Many cult stands were characterized by a removable bowl forming the top of the stand (May 1935: pl. XX, Rowe 1940: pl. LVIIA:4). It could be suggested that the reason for the bowls was to not only keep the top of the altar clean, but to protect it from repeated heat damage that might eventually cause the stand to crumble or collapse.

### **Formation of the Large ‘Ataruz Cult Stand**

Based upon an in-depth consultation with master ceramicist Steven Hansen, former chair of the Department of Visual Art, Communication, and Design at Andrews University,<sup>14</sup> a proposed method of construction for the Large ‘Ataruz Cult Stand was set forth. What follows is a suggested approach to construction.

It seems likely that a square frame box was built to hold the walls of the model. Indication of the walls of the stand being pressed onto a hard surface can be detected on the interior where hand marks can be seen. Ideally, the frame box would be made of wood as wood is easy to form, rather lightweight, and can be made into a straight slab, and does not stick to clay as it dries. Evidence for wood used for construction purposes is the most commonly found use of wood in antiquity and nearly every tool, from the crude to the sophisticated, known to modern carpenters was also widely used (Meyers 1997:

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<sup>14</sup> Steve Hansen is currently the Dean of the College of Fine Art and Design at the University of Central Oklahoma and an internationally recognized and award winning ceramicist. The consultation with him was conducted on December 10, 2015.

348). It has also been suggested that a box-form could have been premade out of fired clay slabs as wood, although present in the region during the Iron Age, would have been scarce and valuable. There is nothing in the way of evidence to support the theory of forms made of wood other than to rely on contemporary methods of constructing similar structures. Ceramic tools have rarely been identified in the ancient Near East which is likely due to tools being made of wood or other perishable material. Potters in general demonstrate the use of wooden tools to this day; they are used to shape and carve appliques and forms when modeling clay. Metal knives are sometimes used to carve leather-hard clay, but even this task can be achieved with a sharpened wooden tool. Thus, the tools used to shape and form the 'Ataruz model shrines, including any wooden box-forms to hold the sides up, would have disappeared long ago.

The wooden box-form would have needed to be at least 60 cm in height, with an interior width of 40 cm or more. This means that each slab of wood would be of considerable size and each piece was likely notched to fit together with the other pieces so the potter could adjust the size of the box depending upon the project he or she was working on.

Based upon the weight of the top portion of the model, it was proposed by Hansen that the Large 'Ataruz Cult Stand may have been built upside down. First, clay slabs were formed and then pressed onto the sides of the frame. The joins of each wall do not show evidence of being assembled when leather hard, but rather show evidence of soft joining. Once the walls were leather hard, pressing a slab into the bottom of the mold created the roof. Evidence of finger and knuckle marks on the underside of the roof (Figure 6.29) reveal that clay was compressed firmly into the base of the mold.



Figure 6.29. The underside of the roof showing where extra clay was pressed into the corners for reinforcement (photo by the author).

It then seems that the base of the shrine, which was still facing upwards at this point, was reinforced as evidenced at the corners of the walls. Indications of extra clay being added to thicken the walls when the original slabs were leather hard can be detected in broken cross sections of the walls. Once the roof was leather hard, the entire mold was likely removed and the stand allowed to dry further until it was strong enough to be flipped upright. It is suggested that at this point a reinforcement frame of some sort was used on the interior of the model to support the roof as it continued to dry. This support could have consisted of wadded up cloth, scraps or wood, or even fired clay supports created specifically for this purpose.

The horns on the roof may have been added next at the leather hard stage with slabs of clay encircling the exterior of the roof, extending upwards to form the four horns. After the horns were leather hard, the interior of the altar was shaped to create a concave depression and covered with a thin, smooth slab that can be detected in broken sections of the roof (Figure 6.30).



Figure 6.30. Broken section of one of the horns showing the laminated layers of clay (photo by the author).

The horns and interior slab were then wet smoothed to form a consistent and seamless surface. As previously mentioned, evidence on broken corners of the stand suggests that the initial wall slabs were not thick enough in certain places and more clay was added after the walls had dried a bit.

After the walls and roof were constructed and the model shrine was leather hard, the edges would be in a position to be squared and smoothed. The two openings on the side were cut out to create squared windows, and the façade or front of the shrine was then carved and decorated. It was suggested that the front wall, or façade of the shrine was added last as it needed to be thicker to accommodate the carving of the figures. After careful observation, it was also concluded that the two male figures were separately hand-modeled and then applied to the façade. It seems possible however, that the heads of the male figures were pre-made in separate molds and attached to the bodies of the figures. Evidence of this can be seen on the interior of the shrine where the heads are attached.

Next, the applique of the animals, the ledge on which the figures are standing, and the slab of clay encircling the entire shrine, separating it into two “stories,” were likely added. The entire drying time would have been dependent upon the weather, but would have been controlled by the potter. Potters traditionally regulate the drying of clay time by covering or wrapping parts of the object with wet cloths to prevent the piece from drying too quickly. In an arid climate such as Jordan, this practice would have been necessary. There is also evidence of a great amount of basalt temper throughout the clay body. The addition of temper is not uncommon and contemporary potters routinely use it to control the shrinkage of vessels and also to add strength. Therefore, it is not surprising to find a lot of temper in the cult stand and in architectural models in general. Typically, temper is found in cooking pots where repeated exposure to high heat would have rendered a pot susceptible to breakage after a period of time. The addition of temper enabled a pot to withstand temperature extremes better. The height and overall weight of the stand would have made it vulnerable to collapse and breakage while drying and while being fired in a kiln. Temper would help prevent that. Lastly, the entire piece seems to have been slipped a creamy white and then painted with red and brown paint. Speculation was also made that the entire shrine was fired before the addition of the red and brown paint.

The overall conclusions that can be drawn are that in spite of having the rustic look typical of architectural models in the Levant during the Iron Age, the skill level and knowledge of the properties of clay are apparent. Whoever created this stand had an intimate knowledge of modeling, drying, and baking the clay without it breaking or blowing apart during the firing process. Structures of this size built out of clay require

considerable skill. The artistic qualities of the painted and modeled motifs may not reveal the skill of someone trained in an artisans workshop, but definitely demonstrate an artist or artists who had the technical know-how of clay, along with moderate artistic ability. The Large Khirbet ‘Ataruz Cult Stand is a testament to a religious object that took time to create. The size, which is the largest ever found in the country of Jordan, along with the elaborately decorated exterior, speaks to the serious purpose for which the object was created. Likely commissioned, this object seems to have been constructed to serve the community as a whole. It’s prominence on the offering platform in the Main Sanctuary Room of Field A attests to this.

### **Conclusion**

When discussing architectural models, it is important to note that nearly all, if not all, of these types of ceramic cult objects from the Levant have been identified as being related to goddess worship, primarily that of Asherah (Keel and Uelinger 1998: 162). Often flanked by female figures, architectural models usually come with other iconographical representation that further attests the goddess. The Large ‘Ataruz Cult Stand, Object AA01-007, has a façade that is flanked by male figures. Although other iconographical design is present, it is difficult to ascertain whether or not any of it pertains to goddess worship or not. The presence of the two male figures places Object AA01-007 in a unique position that has rarely before presented itself. However, according to Keel and Uelinger, when it comes to male deities,

It is very apparent that the bull – as the attribute animal of the weather god – is represented prominently, whereas the lion that was so clearly associated with Amun and Baal-Seth in Iron Age I, plays a marginal role at best in Iron Age IIA (Keel and Uelinger 1998: 173).



Beatrice Muller also comments that alleged human male figures on architectural models, while atypical, is not as rare as one might think (Muller 2002: 166). A model shrine from Gezer displays what has been described as a small male figure wearing a pointed cap. It is speculated that a matching male figure flanked the other side of the entrance to the model (Muller 2002: 148, fig. 145).

Object AA01-007 has been dated to Iron Age IIA, and it is plausible that even though association of the lion with Ba'al-Seth was waning by this time, the lion being held by the left-hand figure could identify the male figure as being a portrayal of Baal-Seth. The other animal – if it is indeed a bull – could represent the Semitic weather god Hadad. Additionally, Keel and Uelinger go on to state that by portraying the deity as a warrior serves a legitimizing function. “A deity deserves to be worshipped because it has shown superior strength in a confrontation with an inimical entity” (Keel and Uelinger 1998: 174).

Both male figures are portrayed in what can be argued as military clothing. Perhaps this is therefore an indication that the male figures on Object AA01-007 represent the god's Ba'al-Seth and Ba'al-Hadad. The word Ba'al literally means 'owner' or 'lord' and can be a generic term for god in general (Lurker 1987: 27). Thus, it is applied to various local deities. Ba'al-Hadad occupied a central position in Syria as a whole. Worship of Ba'al spread to Egypt by the Middle Kingdom (2050-1710 B.C.E.) and was formally recognized in the New Kingdom's 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (1550-1292 B.C.E.) where the god is depicted as wearing a conical cap with a long band and bull's horns (Cornelius 1994: 160). Soon afterwards, Ba'al was identified with Seth. Ba'al-Hadad is the old Syrian god of storms and weather. It is known from Egypt that deities could be displayed

in animal form (Güterbock 1983: 203-17). The Weather God took the form of a bull, seen at the Hittite site of Alaca Höyük (Hundley 2013: fig. 10.3). As in Egypt and Mesopotamia, gods and goddesses exhibited some attributes that were widespread and understood as signs of divinity. Attributes could also distinguish one deity from another. When divine beings were depicted anthropomorphically, depictions of them having mastery over dangerous creatures separates them from their human counterparts (Hundley 2013: 296-97).

As has been stated, the fact that the two figures on Object AA01-007 are male is noteworthy as any anthropomorphic figures associated with architectural models found in Israel and Jordan up to this point have nearly always been female. An exception may be found at Yavneh where in the *favissa* over 200 cult stands were discovered; some containing naked females and male figures. Although rare, the Yavneh directors state however that it was impossible to conclude whether or not all the figures were male or female due to the androgynous nature of some of them (Kletter, Ziffer, and Zwickel 2010: 66). This recalls The Large Tall al-‘Umayri Model Shrine (Object B000016) (Figure 4.2) discussed in Chapter 4 and the androgynous nature of the flanking figures.

Another theory to consider is that the two male figures on Object AA01-007 represent mortal men and not divine figures. A Mesopotamian influence may be hinted at here if one refers to first millennium B.C.E. West Semitic inscribed seals regarded as Aramaic, Ammonite, and Moabite. The common denominator of these particular seals, which Ornan classifies as “mortals as the main motif” (Ornan 1993: 68), involves two figures lacking any divine aspects such as headgear or attributes, flanking a divine motif which could be depicted as an offering table, a candelabrum, a high stand, or altar. Ornan

goes on to state that there was a tendency by seal cutters to avoid the portrayal of anthropomorphic deities in Syria, Palestine, and Transjordan. The typical Neo-Babylonian theme of a worshipper in front of divine emblems reflects this occurrence (Gane 2012), but on a different level. The visual elimination of the human-shaped deity in the first millennium B.C.E. may have therefore been expressed in different ways such as substituting the god with his symbols such as a sacred animal. If Ornan's theory is accepted, then the male figures on Object AA01-007 could be depictions of two human worshippers of local gods whose presence is symbolized by the animals being held. The façade therefore, could have been inspired by locally-carved Mesopotamian-influenced stamp seals (Ornan 1993: 67-71: figs. 56-66).

Previously mentioned was the possibility of an Egyptian influence on the artistic style of Object AA01-007. Could the artistic influences come from somewhere else? By the end of the Bronze Age the political, social, and economic structure throughout the ancient Near East suffered a crisis. While Egyptian domination in Canaan was still strong, in spite of the influx of the Sea Peoples, control and influence over the area of Transjordan was succeeded by a multitude of other powers after the reign of Ramesses VI when Egypt began to enter a long period of decline (Mazar 1990: 287-91). With the end of Egyptian presence in Canaan in the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., other possible artistic influences must be considered as well.

Even though the deterioration of Object AA01-007 is apparent and key parts are missing, the ornamentation indicates at least a somewhat trained artisan, or someone with natural artistic ability. To consider this further, the Phoenicians must be looked at as a possible candidate for influence. Even though the region known as Phoenicia was never

constituted as a unified kingdom like Egypt, the peak of Phoenician influence over the region of Transjordan took place after the invasions of the Sea Peoples, which parallels to the Ammonite, Moabite, and Edomite kingdoms arising in Jordan (Homès-Fredericq 1987: 90). Further evidence provided by archaeological excavation and Biblical texts confirms the passage of the Phoenicians through Jordan via the “King’s Highway” at Rabbath Ammon, Sihan, Rabbath Moab, Bosra-Busierah, Tawlilan, Ain Jenin, and Khaleifeh (Homès-Fredericq 1987: 92). As mentioned previously through the surveys of ‘Ataruz director Chang-Ho Ji, ‘Ataruz, located not far west of the King’s Highway, would have profited from the active trade and interaction with the Phoenicians along this route. In addition, the Phoenicians were known for their art and their works in wood, ivory, metalworking and textiles, attested in the Bible and elsewhere.<sup>15</sup>

The argument for Phoenician influence can be strengthened by the artifacts found *in situ* alongside Object AA01-007. As previously mentioned in Chapter 5, an unidentified bronze piece of exquisite craftsmanship bearing Egyptian-looking *uraei* (Figure 5.22) was discovered next to the fragments of the model. While the iconography of the *uraei* has a clear Egyptian origin, the material out of which the object was made, bronze, seems to indicate a Phoenician creation, as the Phoenicians excelled at bronze work (Homès-Fredericq 1987). Egyptian influence was especially prominent in their art, but was continuously evolving as the political and economic relations between Egypt and the Phoenician cities varied. Another hint might be the head of the figure of The Egyptianized Figure Model Shrine (Object AA01-029, Figure 5.19) that some have attributed to being part of the upper story of Object AA01-007 (Daviau 2008: 295). The

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<sup>15</sup> 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles reads that Solomon commissioned the master craftsman Hiram, from Tyre, to oversee the building and decoration of his temple in Jerusalem.

head of the figure is very round and the hair style exhibits vertical locks that are unique to certain Phoenician ivories (Homès-Fredericq 1987: 91). Finally, the duck on Object AA01-007 demonstrates an Egyptianized influence in the way it is portrayed (Figure 6.19).

It is clear that Object AA01-007 reveals the influences of foreign artistic conventions and those stylistic themes were integrated into the model and adapted to local traditions and interpretations. It is also clear that the creator of the cult stand was skillfully trained, whether by Egyptian or Phoenician artisans, and adapted those skills to the requirements of the inhabitants of 'Ataruz and the religious beliefs practiced there. The Iron Age IIA time frame given for the sanctuary complex and the destruction of the site warrants a serious look at the identity of the objects found within the destruction. If the site of Khirbet 'Ataruz is indeed the site of ancient 'Atarot mentioned in the Mesha Inscription, then this land belonged to the tribe of Gad, having been built by the king of Israel. The destruction, if indeed the destruction by Mesha, would therefore indicate that the sanctuary complex of Field A belonged to Israelites, or at the very least, an Israelite-related population.

Alternatively, according to Mesha, as he rebuilt the site and resettled it, the sanctuary could be Moabite and reflect a later unknown destruction. The sanctuary complex was built upon bedrock however, lending support to the theory that this is an Israelite sanctuary complex along with Israelite-made cultic artifacts of which the Large 'Ataruz Cult Stand belongs. Consequently, this is an artistic corpus of artifacts coinciding with Israelite occupation. The implications of this could shed important information on not only the Israelite religious practices of tribal peoples outside of the realm of influence

of Jerusalem, but also as to the artistic imagery that was derived from the very cultures that were instructed by YHWH of the Hebrew Bible, to stay away from.

This adaptation of artistic motifs from Phoenicia, Egypt, Canaan, Moab, and even as far away as Mesopotamia, resulted in the unique stylistic minutia that was only understood by the residents of ‘Ataruz and the surrounding regions. The use of common motifs that were mentioned in Chapter 2 seemed to be adapted locally. The use of male figures instead of female may have been more common than previously realized, even though Object AA01-007 is the only architectural model utilizing this motif. Seals and other art objects verify this design of men flanking a central element. Finally, the use of ceramic four-horned altars seem to be the most prolific in the Jordan Valley during Iron Age IIA. Therefore, even though Object AA01-007 (Figure 6.31) suggests a very unique artifact, the truth may be that it was not considered so different during its use. While all architectural models seem to have been individually made to suit the needs of the local community or family unit, the structure, with its combination of both model shrine and cult stand attributes, was not so unusual. Continued excavations at ‘Ataruz will hopefully shed more light on this site, the sanctuary complex of Field A, and the artifacts found within.



Figure 6.31. Façade of Object AA01-007, and the right-hand side showing the four-horned altar (photos by the author).

## CHAPTER 7

### SUMMATION AND CONCLUSION

#### **Summation**

The overall purpose of this dissertation was to explore the architectural model findings from two sites, Tall al-‘Uamyri and Khirbat ‘Ataruz, located within the Madaba Plains region of the country of Jordan and to analyze them from the view point of an art historian. Specific goals set forth included a study of existing typologies and classification systems while setting the stage for creating a more substantial architectural model typology for Transjordan. Tall al-‘Umayri and Khirbat ‘Ataruz were chosen because the architectural model fragments were largely unpublished. The analysis was accomplished through detailed descriptions of architectural model fragments, analysis of the motifs used, and consideration of the archaeological context in which they were found.

This dissertation has the intention of helping scholars understand the role these architectural models played in the religious life of the people who created and utilized them. In turn, this will help pave the way for additional research to be added in order to broaden the scope of investigation to include more archaeological sites within the Madaba Plains, and eventually to all the major sites within Jordan.



Chapter 1 examined the term “architectural model,” first used by researcher Beatrice Muller (Muller 2002), and how it is the best term to encompass model shrines and cult stands, both which have been found in Transjordan. As the term implies, the objects considered to be architectural models all have at least one architectural element to them that include a door or entryway, windows, columns, and/or façades. The term also takes into account the fact that most of these objects do not neatly fit into any one category.

A review of existing typologies such as those put forth by scholars such as Lamoine DeVries (1987), Beatrice Muller (2002), Pierre de Miroschedji (1991a), and Hava Katz (2006), was presented. Based on the existing typologies, there was no attempt in this study to recreate yet another all-encompassing typology, but rather to present a typography that would be specific to the Transjordan region. By creating categories based on existing architectural models and fragments, The Madaba Plains Architectural Model Typology addresses both shape and ornamentation while allowing for additional categories to be added if new forms are found. The goal was to create a flexible typology that can be adapted as new research comes to light. By taking this typology and creating a table for each object, it also becomes possible for the information to be easily be implemented into a database.

Chapter 2 looked at the possible uses and functions of architectural models by presenting examples and the context in which they were discovered. A point was made that many of these objects are unprovenanced and thus have not been adequately studied due to major archaeological associations frowning upon the publishing of artifacts that may have been looted or acquired by questionable means. However, the fact that these

unprovenanced objects can still be valued for the iconographical data they possess was pointed out.

The role that architectural models played in the religious rituals of the common people was also discussed, including the possibility that woman played a prominent role in what Dever calls, “folk religion” (Dever 2005). This religion of the common people integrated the religious practices of Yahwism along with the worship of other gods and goddesses, particularly that of Asherah, in practices that were condemned by the Hebrew Biblical writers. Architectural models likely played a conspicuous part in these forbidden religious rituals as evidenced by their proliferation at sanctuaries, temples, and domestic structures that date to the Iron Age.

Discussion also explored the definition of style and how archaeologists must proceed with caution in assigning stylistic categories to architectural models. This is due to the unique nature of each model. However, it is in this very individual quality that the artistic influences from all over the Levant can be seen. According to Suter, the artisans of the Iron Age practiced many different styles regardless of where they lived and without concern of their ethnic background (Suter 2010: 996-97). Syrian, Phoenician, Aegean, Hittite, Egyptian, and Assyrian elements can be seen in motifs that were adapted by the Israelites, Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites. Tall al-‘Umayri and Khirbet ‘Ataruz were inhabited by the Israelite tribes of Rueben (Herr and Clark 2001) and Gad (Routledge 2004: 135) respectively, but the integration of pagan imagery into religious objects makes it very difficult to ascertain ethnicity as the material culture of all of these neighboring cultures is sometimes virtually indistinguishable due to the constant mixing of styles.

The most common motifs used on architectural models are flanking figures, trees/palmettes/columns, lions, and geometric designs. They are sometimes accompanied by other motifs such as gazelles/ibex's, bulls, griffins, birds, and stylized renditions of flowers, particularly that of the lotus and papyrus. These motifs helped convey what Feldman calls collective memory. Feldman sees this as a material component evident in “stylistic minutiae” (Feldman 2014: 44), which are small details in the motifs that can offer clues to shared social practices at the levels of both formation and comprehension of an object (Feldman 2014: 44-45). In other words, architectural models could have helped convey social messages and preserve belief systems to be passed on to future generations.

Beginning in Chapter 3 with the site of Tall al-‘Umayri, detailed analysis was undertaken in order to unpack the physical aspects of specific fragments of architectural models. Building on that description, parallels were drawn to physical details and stylistic similarities. It is clear that the largest concentration of architectural models come from Field H, particularly as related to the Late Iron Age I (Phase 9) open courtyard that was likely used as a shrine or sanctuary. However, with a total of 64 potential architectural model fragments taken from all fields on the tell, the majority of the fragments seem to date to Iron Age II. Tall al-‘Umayri undoubtedly had a thriving architectural model industry, which underscores their importance in the religious life of the people throughout the Iron Age.

Chapter 4 focused on Object B000016, The Large Tall al-‘Umayri Model Shrine. All the aspects of the construction and motifs were analyzed, and the archaeological context was given. Found in the sanctuary courtyard of Field H, Object B000016, along with at least three other identified model shrines, was left in pieces and covered by

additional surface layers indicating a reverence for sacred objects. Dating to late Iron Age I, it was concluded that Object B000016 originated as a wheel-thrown vessel that was modified into a model shrine. Two flanking figures that are facing each other were added at the large entrance. These figures almost act as columns and there are Aeolic-style capitals above each figure's head. The figures themselves are unique in that they seem to be androgynous, indicating that perhaps they may have acted as liminal figures guarding a deity that would have been placed within. Whether or not this deity was exhibited as a separate figurine or was represented by empty space is unknown.

Chapter 5 focused on the architectural models of Khirbet 'Ataruz. Unlike the fragments of Tall al-'Umayri, the architectural models from 'Ataruz are complete enough to give a designation of "certain" and many of them are in a reconstructable state. 'Ataruz has also produced the largest collection of architectural models in Jordan thus far. All of the models have come from Field A and are associated with the Temple Complex during the height of its use during the Iron Age IIA period (Temple Phase II), which dates to the 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. (Ji 2012: 206-07).

According to 'Ataruz director Chang-Ho Ji, the site was connected to road systems coming from the north, south, and west, including the King's Highway from the east. These road systems placed 'Ataruz in a strategic position to take advantage of the inflow of materials, including artisans who brought with them their skills and motifs. As such, it is therefore likely that 'Ataruz functioned as a major center of religious, economic, and political power for a period of time. The artifacts found within the Temple Complex, primarily the Main Sanctuary Room, attest to this. The Egyptian bronze plaque (Figure 5.22) shows a direct influence of Egyptian motifs that is also reflected in

Egyptianized patterns and motifs found on some of the artifacts, including the architectural models.

As the only current indication of economy and history comes from the Mesha Stele and the biblical account of Moab, it is difficult to ascertain if the objects found associated with the Temple Complex are Israelite or Moabite. Regardless, it is clear that architectural models played a very important role in the religious practices of the people of 'Ataruz during the Iron Age.

The largest and most complete architectural model from Khirbet 'Ataruz was discussed in Chapter 6. Object AA01-007 is a cult stand that seems to combine aspects associated with model shrines into an elaborately decorated stand that is now thought to be the tallest of its kind found in Jordan, with a close parallel having been found at Pella (Figure 6.4).

In addition to a formal analysis and comparisons, a suggestion as to how the cult stand was built was presented. Drawing on the consultation of renowned ceramicist Steven Hansen, it was proposed that the stand was perhaps built upside down. The consultation revealed that in spite of the perceived amateur quality of the painted designs and applique work, the cult stand required considerable skill to construct. It is clear that a thorough knowledge of clay was required to build such a large structure without it collapsing or exploding when fired.

Object AA01-007 is unique in that it displays two male figures on the façade. While every architectural model is different, flanking figures are typically female. The presence of two flanking males is one that has no parallels as of yet. What is to be made of this? Is this evidence of Israelite art? According to Beck, we are wrong to assume that

the art found in the Levant in the Iron Age was inspired from one source – namely the Phoenicians (Beck 2002: 212-15). Each people group, Canaanite, Israelite, Judahite, and subsequently, Moabite, developed common motifs taken not only from Phoenicia, but from Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Syria as well. Each group took motifs and utilized them for their own purposes. When one begins to understand the complexities and potential scope of possibilities for interpretation it becomes increasingly clear that it can never be known for certain the specific visual language for every decorated object, even when found within a secure archaeological context. What exactly the two male figures represented may never be known. However, the exceptional quality of Object AA01-007, with its adapted motifs, serves as the ideal example of one of the goals of this dissertation: to show that these objects utilized standard motifs from different cultures and adapted them to suit the specific needs of a community or family.

### **Conclusions Drawn and Importance of the Research**

The findings discussed in this dissertation have revealed a thriving cultic life that incorporated architectural models as a regular part of worship during the Iron Age. The great variety of shape, design, and ornamentation, as well as evidence of varying expertise in craftsmanship attests that influences from the surrounding cultures was strong. The fact that these objects have been found in domestic as well as religious settings indicates that architectural models were not only used in sanctuaries and shrines, but also in homes where woman may have initiated their creation and use.

The study of iconography, or the analysis of motifs, themes, or visual ideas, is vital in order to unpack meaning held within a work of art. In the case of architectural models, it is necessary to be familiar with the daily life, especially the religious one, of

the people in order to understand the meaning of their motifs. It must be kept in mind however, that a motif may have been modified or adjusted across tribal groups in the Levant in order to suit community needs. Thus, in order to understand the symbolism the motifs were meant to convey, one must look for more documentary evidence, as evidence is rarely if ever, found within the work itself. By taking into account fragments of architectural models, as well as the more complete objects, a clearer and more broad picture has been introduced that has shown that architectural models from Tall al-‘Umayri and Khirbet ‘Ataruz during the early Iron Age II displayed androgynous and male figures more than female. Further studies may alter this finding, but it has at least been shown that in the area of Transjordan, male and mixed-gender (or androgynous) figures seem to be as common on architectural models as female figures. This indicates not only Asherah worship, but another aspect of worship that has yet to be identified.

Architectural models and their fragments have been found in nearly every excavation throughout the Levant. Syncretism in art objects as a result of trade and the cultural mixing of artistic styles helped to fan the flames of diversity as attested by the artistic creations made primarily of clay from Iron Age peoples. This dissertation has introduced architectural models as star witnesses of the disparate motifs conveying religious belief and attesting to the practices of folk religion. Scholars have not always considered the art-historical aspects of these often-iconographical enigmatic artifacts. By analyzing selected fragments and reconstructable models from Tall al-‘Umayri and Khirbet ‘Ataruz for their formal qualities as well as taking into account their archaeological context, it has been the goal of this dissertation to show the importance these objects had upon the lives of those who created them as well as acknowledging the

power of the motif. In addition, this has laid the foundation in which a proposal about how they were used can be presented. By treating fragments with the same analysis as more complete objects, a broader picture that conveyed the unique nature and wide dispersal of these objects was able to be created.

The failure to find a comprehensive link between a scientific analysis of architectural models and critical theory concerning the iconography and associated figurines that are sometimes found attached to them has resulted in a latent understanding of how these objects functioned in society. Only a few attempts have been made to adequately take into account the historical and cultural contexts in which these architectural models were made and what impact the iconography would have had upon individual artisans and their communities. This dissertation addresses these issues. Through the study of only two sites, an introduction to the potential research data that architectural models provide has been demonstrated. It has been the intention of this study to assist in bringing more awareness to these objects and to act as a catalyst for future research in Jordan.

This dissertation has also revealed that architectural models were more common than previously thought and that they played a fundamental role in the religious practices of not only worship within shrines and local temples, but in households as well.

### **Recommendations for Future Study**

One of the purposes of this dissertation was to begin a wider conversation on the architectural models from the Transjordanian region. Extending the breadth of research will require the cooperation of archaeological dig directors and more awareness as to what these objects are and what they can look like in fragments, including the tell-tale



markers for identification. Cooperation among sites and the sharing of data will be vital to the continuing success of this research. By continuing analysis at other sites within the Madaba Plains, a broader picture can be painted of the overall religious life within the region. There is also a potential to link sites by tracking similar artistic styles in shape and motif as found on architectural models and their fragments.

The next step in continuing research will be to continue collecting data from other sites within the Madaba Plains and to eventually create an online database where typology information can be entered by dig directors and thus shared with other researchers. A potential existing database that could be used for this purpose has been recently created by ASOR. Called the Levantine Ceramics Project, this online tool is using crowd-sourcing to make it easy for anyone to register, submit, search for, browse, display, and compare information as it pertains to ancient ceramics produced in the Levant, which include the modern countries of Turkey, Syria, Cyprus, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, and Egypt, from the Neolithic period (beginning in 5500 B.C.E.) through the Ottoman period (ending 1920 C.E.). The potential of this database to create a clearer understanding of architectural models is found in allowing archaeologists excavating in all areas of the Levant to upload data, thus helping create an even greater picture of architectural model use. As so many of the known architectural models come from ancient Palestine, the opportunity to search for parallels to Jordanian models increases.

An alternative is to utilize the new database that is currently being implemented in Jordan through the Department of Antiquities. Created by Robert Bates, this database allows for all artifacts found in excavation to be entered and searched for according to criteria. While data would be entered by employees of the various museums throughout

Jordan, it would allow dig directors to submit all the data on these objects, including pictures, so that the information could be uploaded and then searchable from any museum in Jordan. A challenge with this alternative however, is that data that could be lost in translation or objects mislabeled when going from the hands of dig directors to the hands of those entering the data.

While a database strictly for architectural models would be ideal and allow for more specific customization, the above databases which already exist or are in progress are more practical and would allow for a larger audience participation and understanding. Potential sites within the Madaba Plains Region that could be addressed next include Tall Jalul, Tall Hisban, Khirbet Safra, Khirbet al-Mydayna in the Wadi ath-Thamad, and Tell Jawa.

### **Limitations and Possible Solutions**

The limitations of continuing research on the topic of architectural models in Transjordan are evident in the fact that it will require a collaborative effort from dig directors within the region. It is also limited by the amount of data that excavations collect and report. As some excavators are not as familiar with the signs of what may be an architectural model sherd, many of these fragments may be misidentified or even tossed as body sherds. A lot will depend on the research goals of each excavation and how willing sites are to collect the data needed to make a thorough study of the architectural model remains at a site.

Suggestions as to how this research might be facilitated could involve workshops at annual meetings or during summer excavation seasons in order to bring awareness to dig directors as to the typical distribution and concentration of architectural models, as

well as the identifying features marking individual sherds and fragments. Creating an awareness of a database, or assigning a protocol for collecting architectural model information would help streamline the process and provide a way for excavations to enter specific data. Much of this could be accomplished now by building relationships through networking on-site, at annual meetings, and by regular contact through email updates.

When architectural models are found *in situ* in a reconstructable state, it is apparent what all of the fragments are and restoration can result in a partial or nearly complete model. Ensuring that adequate photographs *in situ* are taken as well as careful excavation to ensure all the fragments are collected and cataloged is vital. Mapping the location of the find will also be extremely helpful in creating site maps of distribution. Comparison of these maps to other sites can create a larger picture, allowing researchers to see potential patterns of use and dispersal. Entering information into a shared database will also inform other sites when looking for parallels to findings.

Looking at past dig reports, collections that may be sitting in basements, and a reanalysis of some findings may be in order to flesh out data for some sites. The extent that sites have been excavated has to be taken into consideration as well. Clearly this research will be ongoing as sites are further excavated and new information comes to light.

### **Final Thoughts**

Pirhiya Beck has stated that cult stands are transmitters of iconography (Beck 2002: 205). The relationship between art history and archaeology is not something that is recognized by most people as they are often seen as completely different subjects. However, archaeologists rely on material culture to interpret the past and often that

material culture consists of objects that reveal an artistic quality to them. Before the Italian Renaissance, art was largely functional with the intent to propel an agenda set forth by the royal household, or governing entity. This agenda could be propagandistic; an attempt to sway public opinion politically, or to garner support for the king or leader. Art could also propel religious belief and practices as well as being a teaching tool for conveying ideology. The art of the ancient world took the form of motifs that held meaning. Some of these motifs were so deeply entrenched in the great civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt that they endured for thousands of years and can be found in cultural variations throughout the Levant. While it is clear that the Iron Age peoples of the Levant had a profound sense of aesthetics and sought to beautify palaces, temples, and tombs using the most highly trained and skilled artisans, it is equally as clear that the magic a motif could elicit was prioritized over the skill level needed to produce it.

A great deal of satisfaction can be gained from looking at architectural models without background information, but one is not necessarily sharing in the artisan's experience or enjoying the phenomenon the model was intended to convey. The original meaning is mostly lost to us, and our own life experiences often taint our ability to be truly unbiased when gazing and analyzing an ancient artwork. Furthermore, the constraints of the original context are largely misunderstood or at best, not able to be fully appreciated in the modern world. To understand how architectural models appeared and functioned in the time and place of their creation requires more than analytical and scientific analysis. It requires the recreation of an entire society. This requires more than archaeology, it requires the artist's vocabulary used to describe concepts and visual elements that are often missing from academic studies. The ability of architectural

models to speak to us is not through words, but in motifs and in the artist's hand. It is up to us to listen.

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